

BEYOND SWEETGRASS: THE LIFE AND ART OF JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH

BY

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ABSTRACT

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QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH

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This dissertation is a brief monographic study of noted American Indian artist-Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. No such study of Smith has been completed to date. This particular study is different because it consists of a Native woman looking at another Native woman's art as well as the desires and intents that go into the production of her artwork.

The document is comprised of six chapters and a glossary. The first chapter is a brief introduction followed by a literature review. It is a synopsis of a variety of sources-journals, newspaper articles, and texts. Smith's popularity has been on the rise since the 1980's but little writing exists on her outside of reviews. I attempted to give a chronological examination of writings on Smith on various sub-sets, including Smith's predecessors in "Native American Modernism," then on to Smith with "Identity and Influence," Smith's "Success as a Native American Artist," "Smith's Evolution of Style," "The Debate Over Chief Seattle," and finally a brief segment on "Feminist Art and Smith." I examine the evolution of Smith's style and the subtle inter-relationships produced between her works with both a summary and synthesis of these relationships and influences.

Chapter two gives insight into Smith's biography: her father and his influence, her childhood, teenage years, education. And it also includes a brief look into her adult life. Chapter three discusses Smith's activism, her involvement in artistic cooperatives, and her earliest works. Smith formed two cooperatives that were integral to the art communities' recognition of American Indian work as a viable form contemporary art and not just crafts and tourist trinkets. It considers reviews written about the group exhibitions that Smith formed some of them the first of their kind.

Chapter four analyzes Smith's works and her style's evolution from "nomad art" and landscapes to political art, her appropriation of commercialism and other art styles and how she incorporates her unique form of Native humor to extol how humor has assisted the Native population to survive, flourish and give new insight into the culture, its politics and art.

Chapter five examines the historical and cultural influences of American Indian art and culture on Smith's work. Included is a discussion of gender and its role in Smith's art. Also discussed are traditional art forms and their impact and integration into Smith's work. Religion, assimilation and decolonization, and manifest destiny are also parts of the Anglo or White world that affect Smith's work.

Chapter six is about public works of where Smith was involved in the creation and construction. Smith is one of very few Native artists selected to design and be involved in the actual construction of public art. [There were a number of problems writing this chapter due to a lack of information and some confusion over what are public art and commissioned artwork.]

Finally, in the appendix is a glossary of Native terms that some may need to fully interpret and understand Smith's work. It proves to be one of the most invaluable parts of the document.

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Albert Einstein once said, "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." While I am not sure that he was specifically referring to College professors, I think the quote is quite apt for those professors who have guided me, believed in me and led me when I couldn't quite find the wherewithal to arrive at this destination myself. Many thanks to Dr. Marilyn Stokstad, probably the most admirable woman scholar I know. If I were lucky I would be just like you when I grow up. To Dr. Stephen Goddard, you are a perfect role model and mentor. Thanks for believing in me when no one else did. I must also acknowledge Professor Emeritus Roger Shimomura. You have been so patient and kind. You are probably the most forthright person I know, and I thank you for that.

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Hold on to what is good even if it is a handful of earth.
Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree which stands by itself.
Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here.
Hold on to life even when it is easier letting go.
Hold on to my hand even when I have gone away from you."
~Pueblo Blessing ~

This book is dedicated to Ray and Shirley Thompson who never failed to believe that I would endeavor to persevere.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Dissertation

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Art and the Reclamation of Culture

I first became aware of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in 1991, the eve of the Columbus quincentenary. She came to Haskell Indian Junior College as a visiting artist. I first wrote about Smith's work in 1998 for a graduate seminar, and a year later I wrote the brochure for an exhibition of Smith's work that I curated, "40,000 Years of American Art: The Works of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith" (June 10-August 27, 2000) at the Helen Foresman -Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas. With Smith I co-curated an exhibition entitled "Offerings From the Heart." This exhibition traveled throughout the United States, from 2000-2003, and featured new Native artists that Smith met during her many networking and mentoring sessions.

My aim is to examine [the career] of Quick-to-See Smith's art in detail and provide the first, full-length monographic study documenting her importance and establishing a basis for future scholarship. This is the first time a Native American art historian has looked at Smith's works for the purpose of a dissertation. Therefore, my point of view will be personal at times and very different from previous scholarship of this kind.

This dissertation will investigate the career of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Chapters on early and mature works, Smith's public commissions, and cultural and historic influences on Smith's public commissions are supported by a literature review and various interviews with Smith herself. I have studied the social, political, and cultural

construction of Smith's body of work, and I suggest further directions her career may take. My research is framed by the following questions. 1) In dealing with art galleries, making art for profit, being interviewed, photographed, televised and written about, how do contemporary Native American artists' productively position themselves between the paradox of two cultures and two belief systems? In other words, how does Smith maintain a position of identity, authority, and belonging within her culture and still succeed as a mainstream artist? (2) American Indians traditionally loathe the written word, so how do they re-invent their self- image and work to meet the often-literary demands of critics, galleries, and museums? In his essay "Contexts for Growth and Development of the Indian Art World in the 1960s and 1970s," Bruce Bernstein states, "Indian arts have always been dynamic, challenging conventions and adapting, reinterpreting, and improvising."¹ This could also describe Smith's career. Demonstrating success since the late 1970's, Smith's techniques, styles, theories, and intentions have been constantly and energetically evolving. She has remained slightly rebellious, while at the same time reacting to the demands of museum patronage and gallery support. She also relies heavily on text and the written word and does it with great success. How does Smith accomplish this? (3) Many obstacles confront Native women artists when dealing with the dominant culture. Writers are only beginning to write about Native women artists and their relationship to the avant-garde. What issues does Smith continue to

¹ Bruce Bernstein "Contexts for the Growth and Development of the Indian Art World- in the 1960's and 1970's," in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. W. Jackson Rushing III (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 68.

confront as a Native woman artist? Are there preconceived images / ideals of Native women artists that still exist today?

The strength of Smith's art lies in its capacity to communicate aspects of the American Indian worldview. Smith shares her commitment to furthering public understanding of Native life and culture within contemporary society. Smith explores themes that speak directly to human concerns and of the privileges and obligations of the generations. Throughout her career Smith has been confident in exhibiting art that conveys thoughts and ideas that challenge and confront the viewer. This stance has led to international recognition for Smith. The American Indian experience, as seen from Smith's perspective, presents a compelling message of cultural perseverance and change, as well as the twofold accountability of preserving historical principles while forging new traditions. I have determined that Smith can be seen as an authoritative figure in her Native community who keeps her identity intact while exploring viable ways to create art that reaches across racial and cultural diversity. Smith will be revealed to be seen as an authoritative figure in many Native communities not just her own. Smith finds viable ways to create art that maintains and creates a fusion of mainstream contemporary art and traditional Native American art.

CHAPTER II

Biography: Inspiration, Aspiration, Affirmation and Investigation

Inspiration

While the biographies of Native American women inevitably contain some stereotypes, they also included some truths that are difficult to imagine. Be it film, like Disney's presentation of *Pocahontas*,¹ literature such as the modern biography of Wilma Mankiller,² or the Native oral tradition, the biographies presented tales of strong, heroic women and stories of severe living conditions, poverty, and strife. Even if American Indian women's stories were told from a courageous standpoint, the heroines were most certainly at the mercy of the men they either loved or despised. From a Native perspective the world belonged to White men, and minority women were maligned in many ways.

Native American women's lives are often misunderstood. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith cultivates the pattern of many historic heroines such as Sarah Winnemucca³, Wilma Mankiller and Mary CrowDog.⁴ Many stories have been told or written about Smith's life

¹ Disney Productions 1997 animated release *Pocahontas* was released to great criticism as well as acclaim. She was the daughter of Powhattan, the chief of the Algonquian Native population of Virginia. Her story is legendary but is probably fabricated a great deal. She married John Rolfe, went to London to visit as a dignitary where she soon died.

² Numerous biographies have been written about Wilma Mankiller. She was the principal chief of the Cherokee nation from 1985-1995, when she retired because of illness.

³ Sarah Winnemucca was a nineteenth century Native American speaker and activist.

⁴ Mary CrowDog is a present day Native American speaker and activist. She was present at the 1973 siege of Wounded Knee, actually giving birth to the only child born during

and her art. People want to delve into areas of her life they wouldn't ask about a Caucasian or male artist. Smith's childhood is very interesting to both Native and non-Native viewers. This dissertation will encompass Smith's riveting stories and art making. It is about someone who has had the talent, tenacity, and emotional strength to cope with life's difficulties. Smith turned her experience into a thriving, successful career and life. Her knowledge and the awareness inspired by her early life is expressed in her art with an effect that is intensely powerful and vivid. This chapter concludes with a discussion of her early years as an advocate of Native art and her later involvement in activism, cooperative artist's associations, and public works.

As Smith herself points out, many things have been written about her that are inaccurate or embellished. For example her name has become contested on the World Wide Web and elsewhere. Some sources state that her traditionally given Native name "Quick-to-See" was a gift from her Shoshone grandmother,⁵ while others say it was her Salish grandmother.⁶ Some say it was given to her because of her artistic talent and her vision to see things creatively.⁷ The artist herself explains, "My father gave me a grandmother's name, one who died 10 years before I was born. He respected and admired

the ordeal. Born on Pine Ridge Reservation, she often wrote and talked about poor living conditions and her narrative is featured in the Robert Redford's film *Incident at Oglala*. The film *Lakota Woman: Siege at Wounded Knee* is based on her life story.

⁵ Sherry Babic et al. "Instructional Resources: Manifestations of America from Two Museum Collections" *Art Education*. 54 (3) (May, 2001), 25-32.

⁶ World Wide Art Resources, "Artist's Portfolios: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith." http://wwar.com/masters/s/smith-jaune_quick-to-see.html.

⁷ World Wide Art Resources, "Artist's Portfolios: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith." http://wwar.com/masters/s/smith-jaune_quick-to-see.html

her greatly. I didn't use it until I was an adult. It didn't have to do with art or eyesight, she was a particularly insightful person who read people or situations well.”⁸ In the book of essays on photography entitled *Partial Recall* Smith says the name came from Nellie Quick-to-See Smith Minesinger (1826-1932) who is mentioned as the great grandmother that raised Smith's father.⁹

Even Smith's tribal affiliation is often listed incorrectly. She is actually an enrolled member of the Flathead tribe of Montana, although she is also Cree and Shoshone. In a review of a recent retrospective on Smith's art, Benjamin Gennochio of the *New York Times* cast doubt upon about her background, and now the artist is reluctant to discuss her heritage because she feels that it overshadows the importance of her art.¹⁰ In the 1994 catalogue *Memories of Childhood...so we're not the Cleavers or the Brady Bunch* Smith seems a little less reluctant to share her family story because of the question asked by the curators of each participant in the exhibition, “Would their [the artists'] memories have universal appeal? Could such a project make a difference to the future of children's literature?”¹¹ In her catalogue entry “Jaune Quick-to-Smith” Smith wrote:

“The story of my early childhood is typical of a Native American family of 50 years ago and even today, for some Indian families. This is a story of how a child develops resiliency and coping mechanisms -in a difficult and

⁸ Jaune Smith, personal communication to author. September 10, 2007.

⁹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in *Partial Recall*. Lucy Lippard, ed. (New York: New York Press, 1992), 62.

¹⁰ Benjamin Gennochio. “ART REVIEW; A Horse Trader's Daughter, With Visions of Injustice.” *New York Times*. November 12, 2006.

¹¹ Bernice Steinbaum in “Once Upon a Time...” *The Memories of Childhood...So We're -Not the Cleavers or the Brady Bunch*. (New York: Bernice Steinbaum Gallery: 1994), 6.

disenfranchised world. It demonstrates the skills and creative capacity of children to find alternative routes in coping with adversity. It is not the typical story of Dick and Jane, or the Brady Bunch...And yet, I think it is an uplifting and hopeful story for any adult and child.”¹²

New York Gallery owner Bernice Steinbaum wrote of the exhibition:¹³

“She [Smith] fertilized each idea with an additional idea to give the project the largest children’s audience possible. On several occasions, when overcome by the enormity of the project...Jaune was as insistent as a sore tooth in reminding me of its importance and preventing me from abandoning it.”¹⁴

In her collection of essays on photography, *Partial Recall*, Smith speaks proudly of her family. Her father Arthur Smith was born in Alberta, Canada, in 1901. His grandmother was Native and was purchased for fifty dollars.¹⁵ Smith’s father was raised on the Flathead reservation. He attended a Jesuit school at the St Ignatius Mission, where Smith herself was born. Like many Native children at Christian boarding schools he ran

¹² Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, , in “Once Upon a Time...” *The Memories of Childhood...So We’re -Not the Cleavers or the Brady Bunch*. (New York: Bernice Steinbaum Gallery: 1994),43

¹³ Bernice Steinbaum owned a galley in New York up until the 1990s when she moved it to Miami. She had a reputation for discovering and selling the art of relatively unknown minorities and women

¹⁴ Steinbaum, 9.

¹⁵ Native Americans were often sold by tribes other than their own as slaves. After the arrival of Spaniards and Caucasians, Native slaves were sold as concubines, wives, or both. Northwestern tribes, such as Smith’s, often frowned upon having sexual relations with slaves. www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/4832/slave.html

away constantly. He would often capture untrained horses from neighboring Anglos' farms, break them, and sell them back to the same ranchers from whom he had originally taken them. Smith recalls her father as a very handsome man. He married at age fifteen and had at least five legally recorded marriages. Smith recalls the tragedy of the racism that she and her father suffered:

I remember all too well the trauma I suffered when a white sheriff would come in the middle of the night to take my father away because they were looking for a "hot" [stolen] saddle and 'you know you can't trust them. Even though his reputation for honesty was impeccable, he was Indian and that made him suspect. I felt pain for the unspoken--the things my father didn't name, recite or refute. I felt he was a dignified victim in a malevolent society that was lacking in passion and humanity.¹⁶

Smith further recalls, "My father lived his whole life with prejudice."¹⁷ Although in this particular instance, given the elder Smith's history with horse theft, the sheriff may have had good reason to find him suspect. In the catalogue *Subversions / Affirmations*, curator Alejandro Anreus asked Smith if she was aware of being Native as a youth, Smith replied, "Sure I remember when we went into town sometimes we were asked to leave a store because they did not serve 'dirty Siwashes.' I have a lot of stories like this, but I'd rather not talk about it. You know Alejandro, there comes a point when you are tired of

¹⁶ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in *Partial Recall*. Lucy Lippard, ed. (New York: New York Press, 1992), 61-63.

¹⁷ Smith in *Partial Recall*, 63-65.

being a victim, so you stop. I want to be more life affirming.”¹⁸ Perhaps this is one of the reasons Smith feels so passionately that her past must not overshadow her work

The Early Years

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith was born in 1940 to a fifteen year old part-Cree girl and an itinerant, illiterate horse trader who, according to Smith, was genial and kind, “Between binges of alcoholism and violence that plagued him all his life, my father was a gentle, kind, and giving person who cared about other humans and all animals.”¹⁹ Her mother abandoned her at age two, and Smith recalls missing her intensely, “My mother took us down the road and left us with an Indian couple and I never saw her again. I was about two and one half years old. I remember crying for her...”²⁰ Due to these circumstances, Smith’s father had to raise his two daughters on his own. He managed to do so even through periods of extreme poverty and alcohol addiction. In reviewing Smith’s life it is important to remember that many Native children lived and still live in the same manner. Native families must live on the reservation, with little chance for employment. Smith herself points out that at that time one in ten American Indian children survived.²¹ Today the Office of Minority Health reports that Native Americans

¹⁸Alejandro Anreus. “A Conversation With Jaune Quick-to-See Smith” in *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Subversions/ Affirmations*. (Jersey City: Jersey City Museum, 1996), 84.

Anreus is currently a professor at William Patterson University

¹⁹Alejandro Anreus. “A Conversation With Jaune Quick-to-See Smith” in *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Subversions/ Affirmations*. (Jersey City: Jersey City Museum, 1996), 84.

Anreus is currently a professor at William Patterson University.

²⁰Steinbaum, 9.

²¹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. September 9, 2007.

have 1.5 times as many infant deaths as their non-Hispanic White counterparts²² This is not a story meant to evoke pity. It is a fact of American history. Such misery should not overshadow one's success.

From an early age Smith exhibited talent as an artist. Smith recalls that her first tools were sticks and dirt, with which she drew circles, stick figures, and lines. She remembers, "It was the physical experience of moving a stick through dirt was so appealing."²³ Like most excited children who see figures in clouds or in spots on wallpaper, she depended on nature for inspiration. Smith clarifies, "I blotted out a world I didn't know how to deal with and created a small world I could manage..."²⁴

As she wrote, her "fate was cast when Smith entered the first grade and was exposed to crayons, paste and tempera."²⁵ However one would have to wonder if she didn't inherit her artistic talent from her father, and in school she merely found tools more suitable for her small hands.

²²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: The Office of Minority Health
"Infant Mortality and American Indians/Alaska Natives"
<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/content.aspx?ID=3038>

²³ Smith, personal communication to author, September 9, 2007.

One should note that this story is very similar to the story Giorgio Vasari relates about the artists Giotto in *Lives of the Artists*. According to Vasari, the Florentine painter Cimabue discovered Giotto working as a young shepherd while drawing on stones and in the dirt with a pointed stone. I personally have also heard this story from various other Native artists making it either a "ubiquitous legend" or a timeless childhood activity-- probably the latter.

²⁴ Interview with Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Trinkett Clark in *Parameters*, exhibition brochure, (Norfolk, VA: The Chrysler Museum, 1993), n.p.

²⁵ Ibid.

Smith recalls, “Most definitely my father was my favorite artist. He would draw pictures of animals on small pieces of paper for me and I would carry them for weeks in my pocket.”²⁶ Smith fondly recalls many times when she was inspired by the fine, split wood corrals and the tightly braided lariats he made by hand, his collection of Charlie Russell prints that hung in their bunk house among the sawhorses and bridles, his treasured collections of beadwork and Navajo saddle blankets.

Smith had another formative experience early in life. As a child, she worked as a farm hand for a Nisei family.²⁷ One Saturday, at age thirteen, Smith was invited to go with the family to see the featured film *Moulin Rouge* in Kent, Washington. Directed by John Houston and starring José Ferrer and Zsa Zsa Gabor, it was one of the top ten movies of 1952 and garnered seven Oscar nominations. The film is a fictionalized account of the life of French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

This particular film revealed Lautrec to be a brilliantly talented man who lived a tortured life. Abandoned by his wealthy father, he moved to Paris where he befriended prostitutes and bar patrons in a frenetic attempt to live a normal life. The people were poor but good souls who found the pitfalls of their lifestyle inevitable. Lautrec meandered through the Monmarte section of Paris looking for love and acceptance while creating his art.

²⁶Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal Communication to the author. September 10, 2007.

²⁷ Nisei is a term that defines people, or a person, of Japanese ancestry and the second generation to be born abroad.

Smith recalls the film fondly, and it was the first time she became conscious that she wanted to be an artist.²⁸ One could draw parallels between Smith's life and the one portrayed of the artist in the film. True, Lautrec was wealthy but he lacked a parent's love and he lacked any close friends, except for those passing through a bar. Eventually he succumbed to alcoholism. Alcoholism was something Smith could relate to because of its prevalence on the reservation. Yet there are obvious differences between Smith's life and Lautrec's. She moved about constantly, which must have made having friends difficult. She worked and lived with other itinerant people. Later during her teens she worked as waitress and in canneries. Upon reflection, one can see the loneliness in Smith's life, and the need to be recognized and loved. Smith was so impressed with Toulouse-Lautrec she once posed for a picture with a beret and an axle grease moustache painted on her face. The film must have been a determining factor in her career as an artist. When asked about her admiration for Toulouse-Lautrec, Smith stated, "my admiration for Toulouse was about seeing a real artist in action, seeing the life of an artist for the first time and his dedication. He and his pictures were all foreign to me and didn't fit into my world."²⁹

Aspiration and Education

At age sixteen, further inspired to become an artist, Smith enrolled by mail in the "famous artist course" once advertised on matchbook covers and in comic books. She paid for it by using the money she made as a farm hand and waitress. Many people remember the small, cartoon-like pictures with captions that read, "draw me!" The ads contained information on "how to become a professional artist." Albert Dome and

²⁸Julie Sasse. *Postmodern Messenger*. (Tucson: Tucson Museum of Art, 2004), 2.

²⁹Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. September 10, 2007.

Norman Rockwell, who recruited top-notch artists, founded the school in 1948. The earliest classes offered were painting, illustration, and cartooning. The course consisted of twenty-four lessons sent to the students in three large binders. The average cost for a two-year course of study was \$300 payable in monthly payments.³⁰

When asked if she took art in high school, Smith noted, “I made art on my own but took business courses in public school so I could support myself. If you look at the background of most noted New York artists you will find that they came from families of privilege. They went to private schools, took private art lessons. Generally by going to the right schools, they were able to step out into careers that seemed made for them. The same is true today.”³¹ At times Smith seems to take great offense at the fact that she had to struggle more than other artists. At other times she seems to use it as a positive way to prove that she has struggled long to achieve her goals. These contradictions are similar to her fears that her early family life overshadowed her artistic motivations; at other times she seems to use memories of the past to show she has struggled and triumphed.

Smith also faced the problems of many women who wanted to pursue careers. “The same [discrimination] is true about my being a woman and an artist. The male instructors I had in 1958 and over the next 20 years made it clear that women could not be artists. In fact, the first male professor at Bremerton called me into his office and told me at the end of the year that I could draw better than the men, but a woman could not be an artist and I needed to leave the art department. He suggested that I become a teacher.

³⁰ In 2007 the courses still exist. Cortina Learning International of Western Connecticut now owns the company and course prices range from \$400 to \$1,000.

³¹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. .November 2, 2005.

And of course eventually by going to school part time, I accumulated enough credits to get my Art Ed degree. I did believe him.”³² Fifty years ago someone as determined and outspoken as Smith took such remarks seriously. Again, the “struggling artist” persona appears on and off. In a July 10, 2005 interview with Charles Giuliano, Smith says she chose the University of New Mexico because she wanted to teach. Smith said, “I hoped to teach art on a reservation...And that [the University of New Mexico] was the only Native American Studies program in the country at the time.”³³ Furthermore she relates that her art career only began to take precedence at about the same time as her graduation with degrees in Arts and Native Studies. It leaves one to wonder if Smith resigned herself to a career in education or if it was truly her original intent.

In 1958 Smith entered Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington to study art. She was determined despite a lack of encouragement from the male professor at Bremerton.³⁴ She graduated with an Associate of Arts degree in 1960. From that point on, Smith’s college attendance was sporadic, depending on her financial situation. She worked as a waitress, Head Start teacher, factory worker, domestic, librarian, janitor, veterinary assistant, and secretary to put herself through school. In 1976 she eventually graduated from Framington State College in Massachusetts with a Bachelor’s degree in art education. Smith participated in a number of exhibitions before completing graduate

³² Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. September 10, 2007.

³³ Charles Giuliano. “Jaune Quick to See Smith.” *Big, Red and Shiny*. July 10, 2005. http://www.bigredandshiny.com/cgi-bin/retrieve.pl?section=column&issue=issue24&article=GIULIANO_JAUNE_59123

³⁴ Charles Muir Lovell. *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Modern Times*. (Las Cruces, NM: New- Mexico State University, 1997), 3

school. In 1974 she had a solo exhibition at an unidentified Unitarian church in New England, and in 1976 she exhibited at the Mazmanian Gallery at Framington State College.

According to the artist, in 1977 she was “juried into an exhibit at UNM where the Houshour gallery visited and asked me to join them in Albuquerque which was an honor since they represented Robert Natkin, Betty Parsons, John Knight and many other noted artists.”³⁵ She was included in another exhibition there in 1979. Smith later returned to the southwestern United States and enrolled in a graduate program at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She graduated with a Masters’ degree in Art in 1980. Smith has also been awarded two Honorary Doctorate degrees--in 1998 from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in Philadelphia and in 2003 from Massachusetts College of Art, in Boston.

Affirmation and Activism

In 1977 Smith founded a group of Native artists in Albuquerque known as the Grey Canyon Artists. The name actually referred to the grey cement canyons of the city. The name of the group is also very interesting because it signifies the transition of Native artists from the more stereotypical areas that dominant culture thought of as Native living space. It also indicates that Native artists were creating work about their changing environments and their new expanded experiences. For four years the Grey Canyon Artists exhibitions toured the US.³⁶ The group toured such sites as the American Indian

³⁵ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. November 2, 2005.

³⁶ Lawrence Abbott. *I Stand In The Center of The Good*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 220.

Community House in New York City, the Art Gallery of the University of North Dakota, the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, the Heard Museum in Phoenix, the Iowa State University Art Gallery, the Albuquerque Museum Plaza Gallery, the Upstairs Gallery in Berkeley, the K. Phillips Gallery in Denver, the Portland, Oregon Art Museum, and the Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, Oklahoma. Most of these major museums are known for their premier Native American art and exhibitions, although some of the smaller galleries no longer exist.

In 1978 Smith joined the Clark Benton Gallery of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, which enjoyed a very popular reputation in the late 1970s and 1980s. After the exhibition Susan Crile, a New York artist, purchased Smith's work from the Hoshour Gallery in Albuquerque. Crile requested that her partner, cartoonist Jules Pfeiffer, introduce Smith to gallery owner Jill Kornblee in New York.³⁷ As a result Smith joined the Kornblee Gallery in New York in 1979, and on another occasion the noted Native American artist Fritz Scholder³⁸ gave Smith the opportunity to meet Marilyn Butler of Scottsdale, Arizona, who asked Smith to work there and realize an exhibition. Around the same time the Tamarind Press at the University of New Mexico invited Smith to create prints. Tamarind Press is a fine arts lithography studio that also provides excellent educational opportunities.

³⁷ Now deceased, Jill Kornblee, was an art dealer whose Manhattan gallery handled the work of many well-known contemporary artists.

³⁸ Fritz Scholder (1937-2005) was a Native artist of Luseino descent who was a major influence on several generations of Native artists. Scholder struggled to depict "real" American Indians and not the romanticized depictions of his predecessors.

In 1979, the Clark Benton Gallery had nothing to do with the Santa Fe Indian Market. As Smith maintains, “It was a hip, happening place that featured mostly NY artists.”³⁹ One of Smith’s instructors at the University of New Mexico admonished her for exhibiting at the Santa Fe Indian Market, when she was actually exhibited at a gallery. After he hurled a copy of the *Santa Fe Review* across his desk, the instructor chastised her for “cheapening” herself by exhibiting at the Santa Fe Indian Art Market. One event Smith believed led to this confrontation was that her application to graduate school at the University of New Mexico. She applied three times beginning in 1976. According to Smith, “They kept telling me that Indians didn’t belong in fine arts, but they always went to art education. It’s possible I was the first Indian they graduated.”⁴⁰ However, it seems likely that by 1980, many Native people could have gone through the Fine Arts department. Certainly there is a large Native population in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and the surrounding areas. Furthermore the Institute of American Indian Arts was in Santa Fe by 1980. Smith seems to feel slighted by the University of New Mexico and suspects that her Native status had been used against her. This may be true, but it is impossible to verify.⁴¹

In 1979 Smith formed an artist coop, called COUP MARKS, on the Flathead Reservation of her birth. This group’s exhibitions traveled to New York and Washington D.C. with the assistance of Seneca artist Peter Jemison and Muscogee /Creek sculptor

³⁹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. November 2, 2005.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Upon trying to verify this information through the University of New Mexico I found it was impossible to authenticate

Retha Gambaro.⁴² COUP MARKS has special meaning for Native American artists. In many tribes to “count coup” means to strike one’s enemy without actually harming them and without bringing harm to one’s self. By performing such an action the warrior actually disgraced his enemy, a fate far worse than death. To other tribes to “count coup” means to recount or recollect battle stories of great success. According to the official Flathead Tribal newspaper *The Char-Koosta- News* of June 6, 2007, the COUP MARKS cooperative is still in existence and is identified as:

An inter-tribal organization comprised of Native American artists and craftsmen living on the Flathead Reservation." The name COUP MARKS symbolizes the individual artist's mark on their work - in the same sense as the Plains Indian's historic practice of counting coup (making their mark). Major objectives of COUP MARKS include providing marketing possibilities to reservation artists and craftsmen, encouraging traditional arts and crafts products, and preserving cultural traditions.⁴³

COUP MARKS has had exhibitions at the American Community House Gallery in NYC, Via Gambaro Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Native American Art Display and Sale in Great Falls, Montana.⁴⁴ Although they never made great strides

⁴² Peter Jemison is an artist of Seneca descent from the Huron clan. He is known for art and film. Retha Gambaro is a Muscogee-Creek sculptor who works in primarily in limestone and bronze. She also makes Native shields and medicine wheels, a skill she learned from elders.

⁴³ *Charkoosta News*. “The official news publication of the Flathead Nation.” June 6, 2007. http://www.charkoosta.com/2007_06_07/coup_marks_group_markets_rez_art.html

⁴⁴ Dwight Billideaux. Personal communication to author, October 10, 2007.

artistically, Dwight Billedeaux, one of the artists involved, claimed that Smith helped them realize their artistic goals by helping them find venues for their exhibitions and sales.⁴⁵ This is all part of Smith's legacy. Her own career has often taken a back seat to promoting her fellow artists and assisting them to find venues for their work. She is known for helping countless students get their careers started as well.

Smith was the first known person to curate a modern Native American art photography exhibition. When Smith became aware of Tlingit artist Jesse Cooday's Native photography she became extremely interested in finding a venue for Native photographers who had nowhere to exhibit their work.⁴⁶ When she failed to find a venue in the early 1980s, the director of the Southern Plains Indian Museum, Rosemary Ellison, took over the project and added even more works of photography from her home region. Smith's well-rounded circle of Native friends, including Native artist and professor Joe Fedderson and the director of the Atlatl, helped book the exhibition in New York, Seattle, and at The Heard Museum in Phoenix.⁴⁷ A total of sixty photographers were included in

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Jesse Cooday is a Tlingit artist, musician, and photographer who is a member of the Eagle/wolf and Shark clans.

⁴⁷ Atlatl, Inc. is a Native American Arts network. The word atlAtl is of Uto-Aztecan linguistic origin. An atlAtl is as a wooden tool, which facilitated a spear to be launched with superior intensity and precision. It was one of the most highly developed technology that was accessible to Native Americans at the initial European contact. According to their mission the AtlAtl Organization, "AtlAtl, a non-profit organization, enables Native American artists and cultural organizations to utilize available resources in the most-effective and efficient manner. The atlAtl was chosen to symbolize our organized commitment to this mission." www.dinehweb.net/Portfolio/atlatl2/aboutus/aboutus.htm

the show entitled *The People's Show*. Today we take Native American photography for granted; Native photography is an accepted art form that is shown throughout the world. But in 1995 New York critic and curator Lucy Lippard noted, "Photography as an art medium is quite new to most Native peoples--not only for economic reasons but also because it bears a terrible stigma from post contact days when government surveyors, priests, tourists, anthropologists and white photographers 'were yearning for the "noble savage" dressed in full regalia looking 'stoic' in the words of Quick-to-See Smith."⁴⁸ Smith's ability to help other Native artists re-appropriate their culture through this art form and successfully produce and display it as art is a truly remarkable act. She also worked hard to eradicate stereotypes and cultural boundaries, as we shall see.

From 1983, Smith's role as curator and activist took off at a swift pace, as she became one of the best advocates and promoters of contemporary Native art. Smith took a graduate class with Visiting Professor Harmony Hammond⁴⁹ at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The two women, along with Erin Younger, a freelance writer, curator, and former curator of Indian art at the Heard Museum, organized the first contemporary Native Women's touring exhibition entitled *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage* in 1985. The exhibition traveled throughout the United States with a catalogue of essays written by Erin Younger, art critic Lucy Lippard, professor and artist Hammond, and artist/ activist Smith. Smith remembers, "Touring exhibitions with a

⁴⁸ Lucy Lippard's , *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Smith*, Jaune Quick-to See quoted in *Essays on Feminist Art*. (New York: The New Press, 1995), 282.

Lippard is a noted New York art critic and writer.

⁴⁹ Harmony Hammond is currently an artist, writer and independent curator.

<http://www.harmonyhammond.com/#>

catalogue and a New York writer put this exhibit into the big time. The days of scraping pocket money together and begging people for an exhibit space and Xeroxing announcements became a part of our history.”⁵⁰ In Smith’s essay one can visualize the rapidly changing world of Native women artists at that period in time, “Indian men have been considered the painters, sculptors and makers of large objects. On the whole, Indian women still tend to make smaller works and have a large overlap with craft. Economically we haven’t had the space to work large, but that is changing. Well over one half of the women in this show now have separate studio spaces in which to make their work.”⁵¹ In sum, Smith has been integral to the promotion and eventual acceptance of Native American women’s art.

In 1984 the director of the State University of New York Tyler Art Gallery met with Smith to discuss a Native exhibition. Because of Smith’s continuing artistic interest in creating landscapes and because Native people have an intimate or familiar relationship to the land, they decided to create an exhibition related to that subject entitled *Our Land Our Selves*. In the opening statement Smith speaks of Indigenous peoples’ ties with the land, “Each tribe’s total culture is immersed in its specific area. Traditional foods ceremonies and art come from the indigenous plants and animals as well as the land itself. The anthropomorphism of the land spawns the stories and catalog with essays by Lucy Lippard, Native curator and writer Rick Hill, and painter Paul Brach,

⁵⁰ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in *I Stand In The Center of the Good*. Lawrence Abbott, ed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 221.

⁵¹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. *Women of Sweetgrass*. (New York: Gallery of the American Indian Community House, 1985), n.p.

with an introduction by Smith, the exhibition's curator.⁵² The exhibition itself was quite a feat. Smith managed to create an exhibition that was unlike many previous Native exhibitions. Lippard spoke of the importance of such an exhibition during these times, "For all their references to and reverences for tradition, these artists are making new artifacts to replace those that have been stolen from them and placed disrespectfully in alien contexts...They also replace outworn notions of what Indian art is, what Indians are, and reciprocally, what we the Others are. In the process, they are healing some wounds and following the circle around again."⁵³ This exhibition really departed from those previously discussed. It was one of the first exhibitions where Native artists reclaimed art forms as their own creations and not something forced upon them to perpetuate stereotypes and theories of colonization. By re-appropriating the land and the identity that was once theirs, if only figuratively, theirs was one of the earliest examples of artistic decolonization.

Smith was simultaneously on the board at the Atlatl Organization and the Montana Contemporary Art Board.⁵⁴ With the anniversary of Columbus' landing

⁵² Paul Brach, now deceased, was an abstract artist who was the husband of artist Miriam Shapiro. He also exhibited his work at the Flomenhaft Gallery in NYC, as does Smith. Rick Hill or Richard Hill Sr. is from the Tuscarora nation and is a writer and curator having worked at the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian.

⁵³ Lucy Lippard. "The Color of the Wind" in *Our Land Our Selves*. (New York: Northern Telecom Inc, 1991), 13.

⁵⁴ For information regarding the Atlatl Organization see p.13. The Montana Contemporary Art Board is affiliated with the Montana Museum of Art and Culture at the University of Montana.

looming, Smith called a meeting of her colleagues. Together they created the “Submuloc Show/ Columbus Show” exhibition.⁵⁵ Smith said, “This way of working actually comes right out of our tribal roots, but I think with our Euro-American art training we have separated high-art functions from tribalness.”⁵⁶ The show was met with varying criticism. For example from Laurel Reuter wrote: “I was unsettled by this exhibition. The artists seemed to have responded to a curator’s wish rather than to have made their own work.”⁵⁷ Ms. Reuter, the founding Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art, was asked to give her opinion of the exhibition on a panel at the National Meeting of the Atlatl organization at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Her opening statement was, “Don’t preach at me, the viewer. Convince me through visual means. Don’t let curators or organizations lead you into making art that is not natural to you. I believe that the only artists who look good in this exhibition are those who have always confronted political issues through their art. Much of the work seems forced. And it preaches. And it preaches.”⁵⁸

I believe Ms. Reuter had an understandable reaction to the exhibition. When Smith was asked to do the exhibition, she and the other artists were asked to do work

⁵⁵ This exhibition was a multi-media, Native American visual art exhibition that recognized artistic responses to the Quincentenary anniversary of the encounter between America’s Indigenous peoples and Columbus.

⁵⁶ Abbott, Lawrence. *I Stand In The Center of Good*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 222.

⁵⁷ Laurel Reuter "[Musing into winter](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0425/is_n3_v53/ai_16445940)". *Art Journal*. Fall 1994. FindArticles.com. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0425/is_n3_v53/ai_16445940 (Accessed September 12, 2007), 2.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

directed at the Columbus folklore and their gut reactions to it. Perhaps some of the art seemed bit strained. For example, Native professor and philosopher Dr. Daniel Wildcat created a handwritten original song, *Olleh Submuloc*, (fig. 2-1) about the actions of Columbus, with an accompanying recording as an item to be exhibited.⁵⁹ The song is creative and emotionally stirring. However, without being performed in person, the song loses its impact. The handwritten lyrics do not convey the message that it seems Dr. Wildcat intended. Dr. Wildcat, an extraordinary orator and singer, in person, needs to participate in this art. The handwritten lyrics and recording fall short of the impact of a live performance, a common problem for performance artists.

Bob Haozous' work *Chiricahua Apache Skull* (fig.2-2) is a 32-inch x 18-inch x 19 inch metal assemblage, exemplifying the most powerful work in the exhibit.⁶⁰ It consists of a metal orb whose façade is a manufactured metal skull. Beneath the sculpture is a stand with the words "Mangas Coloradas." Mangas Coloradas was a legendary Apache chief who was a force to be reckoned with until captured by the cavalry. While imprisoned, his guard killed him by blistering his feet with heated bayonets and cutting off his head. His brain was used for various "scientific" experiments intended to prove White racial supremacy. His murder should be remembered as one of America's most

⁵⁹ Dr. Daniel Wildcat is a Yuchi/ Muscogee Professor of American Indian Studies at Haskell Indian Nations University and is a well known speaker on various subjects throughout the world.

⁶⁰ Bob Haouzous is a Chiracahua Apache artist. His father was the sculptor Allan Houser. Haouzous is the original spelling of the family name before changed by Anglos. The sculpture shown in this dissertation was stolen from the exhibition and its whereabouts remain unknown.

shameful moments. While Mr. Haozous doesn't address Columbus, as most of the other artists do, he manages to convey the horror and atrocity of the European invasion, extermination, and assimilation. His message is not contrived, and its meaning is inescapable. It is the essence of White contact, extermination, and assimilation.

In 1993 Smith curated an exhibition entitled *We The Human Beings / 27 Contemporary Native American Artists*. The opening essay of the catalogue by professor of art history and museum director Thalia Gouma-Peterson explains the importance of this exhibition:

“The twenty-seven Native American artists in this exhibition are walking on mined territory, as they are taking the courageous step of naming themselves through images.... these artists are consciously working to recover both personal and cultural identity through their creative acts.”⁶¹

Although she noted the impact of this exhibition, perhaps Gouma-Peterson overlooked its depth.⁶² Throughout forced assimilation and annihilation Native peoples have persevered to create art. Art has been used to perpetuate American Indian stories, history, and livelihood. It can be observed in nearly every aspect of their lives in the past, present, and future. Art can be viewed as a commemoration of Native survival, and this exhibition is a visual testimony to Indigenous peoples continued existence and endurance.

Smith went on to curate over thirty Native American art exhibitions at universities, art centers, and museums throughout the United States and abroad. To this

⁶¹ Thalia Gouma Peterson. *We the Human Beings / 27 Contemporary Native American Artists*. (Wooster, Ohio: The College of Wooster Art Museum), 7.

⁶² Thalia Gouma Peterson is a professor of art history and the museum director at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio.

day she is a diligent and determined supporter of Native art. A lesser-known fact about Smith is that she collaborates with many different minority artists. Smith explains, “We are all committed to narrative work on some level. I think the real differences between people of color and Euro-American people is that we’re such storytellers and we get it firsthand.”⁶³

Smith has also been involved with site-specific work. In 1991 she and artist, activist, teacher Corky Clairmont prepared an environmentally themed site-specific symposium at the Flathead Reservation.⁶⁴ She was also involved with another site-specific workshop, with Navajo botanist Donna House at the Cattaraugus Seneca Reservation in upstate New York. At each of these sites these artists lived together briefly, working both singly and collaboratively in a communal process that was very rewarding for all involved. Elders and other community members watched the very spontaneous event with awe.⁶⁵

Smith has juried over thirty-three exhibitions, including the Oklahoma Memorial Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., the Bush Artist Fellowships, and the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. She serves as an art juror at exhibitions at numerous Native art festivals, university exhibitions, museum

⁶³ Lawrence Abbott. *I Stand in the Center of the Good*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 225

⁶⁴ Corky Clairmont is from the Salish Kootenai reservation and shares the same birthplace as Smith-St. Ignatius, Montana. He is also an art instructor at the Salish Kootenai Tribla college in Pablo, Montana.

⁶⁵ Lawrence Abbott, 224-225.

shows, photography exhibitions, and various biennials. Lecturing has been a primary focus of her promotion of Native causes and Indigenous arts at over 225 museums, universities, and conferences, including in China and Poland as well as the National Women's Art Caucus in NYC, and more, throughout the United States including numerous museums, keynote addresses, commencement addresses, universities, and various education associations.

Today Smith continues her work as an activist, artist, mentor, teacher, and advisor. Smith's many causes are evident in every aspect of her work. Continuing to build on her Native perspective, as well as her cultural and tribal political views, Smith's work takes in hand all of these serious issues with a sense of wit and insight that continues to enlighten and inform her public.

CHAPTER III

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Activism, Cooperatives and Early Works

The formation of cooperative art associations was one of the many ways American Indian artists responded to European occupation. While some groups of artists fell victim to unscrupulous dealers and traders who took advantage of artists by purchasing items at a low price and selling them for much more. Other co-ops such as the groups started by Smith were developed to escape the conflict within certain councils and art juries that determine who should and shouldn't be included or excluded from American Indian art competitions.

Cooperative associations appeared in 18th and 19th century Europe, when working people lived in tremendously harsh conditions, enduring horrifically inadequate consumer protection. Cooperatives typically operated as autonomous associations of persons who united voluntarily to meet common economic and social needs. Ideally they operated under the conventions of self-help, self-respect, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In addition, members were expected to exhibit strong ethics, honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. They shared common interests and social concerns and came from all areas of a community. They were not necessarily friends but were comrades for a common cause. The 1960's saw a resurgence in the establishment of cooperatives usually focused on food, and housing.

The History of Native American Cooperatives

Cooperatives are self-governing businesses owned by the people they assist. Typically artists' cooperatives are business-based organizations that embrace artists' communities, artists' colonies, and mutually owned commercial enterprises. Native art considered outside the realm of traditional art has not always been such a trouble-free venture. For example, American Indians developing web sites and selling their work through Internet auctions such as e-bay and others, Native people are celebrating a fairly recent history of self-management in selling and distributing their creative products. However, the production and sales of Native art, outside the realm of traditional art, has not always been such a trouble free venture.

Non-traditional Native art poses special problems, as does non-traditional means of marketing and distributing Native creations. The creation of "art" was and is a significant characteristic of Native American economy and existence aside from other communal activities such as fishing, hunting and other means of subsistence. Art can be seen as a luxury; in Native communities art has often a double function as something visually stimulating and utilitarian as well.

The Cherokee Nation

In 1946 the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual of the Cherokee tribe decided to "cut out the middle man" and help artists re-invest their profits for other worthwhile investments. Forming one of the first artistic co-operatives, for forty years the tribe and those involved laid the groundwork for those involved to learn good planning for later preparation for administration of larger financial opportunities and further affairs of the

tribe.¹ In the early 1900's they constructed mostly baskets that they exchanged to resident white farmers for food. Double-woven baskets are very strong. Originally made for utilitarian reasons not aesthetics, the women who wove these for their personal use and later for trade. Because their design was so striking some farmers began reselling the baskets to collectors and museums.²

Inuit Art

Other Native groups such as the Inuit of Northern Canada also developed art co-operatives. Many developed a new non-traditional art form- graphic arts. By issuing print editions, they augmented their income. Different techniques were used in the prints such as stenciling; etching, engraving, lithography and a stone cut method. In 1957 James Houston introduced the art form of print making to the Inuit people. Each community organized its cooperative and each reflected elements of their unique identities. As Giese notes, “Their artistic creations often involve themes of shamanistic transformation, humans transforming into animals, or flying across the sky with their spirit helpers.”³ They also draw renderings of ancient stories and legends.⁴ Janet Berlo identifies, The West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative as the oldest and most famous; they have market annual

¹Paula Giese. *Tsalagi Basketry Qualla Co-op*.
<http://kstrom.net/isk/art/basket/baskche2.html>.

²Ibid

³Ibid

⁴Ibid

editions since 1959.⁵ This cooperative still exists today. Artists produce prints and the organization decides which prints will be printed for sales each year.⁶

Historically Native artists were confined to using techniques, materials and subject matter that appealed to a certain kind of patronage that denied their ability to branch out into mainstream modernism, post-modernism and beyond. Previous to 1970, the market for Native American art was certainly made for a white audience. Eventually Native artists did consciously attempt to break away from the confines of this imposed, self-conscious style.

The Grey Canyon Group

As her art career began, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith became increasingly aware that Native art historically had been omitted from the dominion of fine art and relegated to the lesser category of utilitarian objects by the White, mainstream cultural and political opposition. She also realized that the art buying public generally favored art produced by men. These issues and Smith's persistence in promoting Native arts has been an arduous and continuing process. Smith explains her earliest involvement with "The Grey Canyon Artists," "As a mother of three children and now a grandmother of five, I believe that my activism and organizing people around common interests is because of the training received with this job description. I began organizing as a political venture in 1976 with Grey Canyon (a metaphor for the city) artists, and a group of contemporary Native artists who experimented with materials with no intent to appeal to the tightly controlled, annual

⁵ Janet Berlo. *Native North American Art*. (Oxford University Press: New York), 164.

⁶ "The Resiliency of Indigenous Art Examined in Forms of Exchange: Art of Native Peoples from the Edward J. Guarino Collection." (Vassar: Frances Lehman Art Center, April 28- September 3, 2006).<http://collegerelations.vassar.edu/2006/2176/>

Santa Fe Indian Market. We would simply gather at my house for a bowl of stew and an evening of discussion about our work. We were controversial and visible on an ongoing basis for a period of four or five years.”⁷ Mary Priestly, curator of the 1983 exhibition “Grey Canyon and Friends Contemporary American Indian Art” from the Portland Art Museum explains, “ It well describes the confluence of culture at the heart of contemporary urban Indian experience. Raised on reservations by parents who could not read or write, the artists of the Grey canyon are themselves highly educated.”⁸

Smith was instrumental in helping the artists so that their work went beyond the river basins, mountains, natural canyons and cliff dwellings into the urban areas where they had restricted during the years of land allotment and urban relocation. Natives existed all over the country and weren’t restricted to the confines of the desolate reservation and the tourist trade.

Smith goes on to explain that it was simply a man’s world in the overall Native art market, and specifically Santa Fe. Men were allowed to show in formal exhibition spaces. Women were relegated to trading posts, curio shops and the Santa Fe Indian market. When women were allowed to exhibit their art with men, they were consigned to a space away from the men and often isolated from the show by their placement in out-of-the-way locations within the exhibition. Smith said, “ We believe that we are helping to

⁷Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, “The Story of a Cultural Arts Worker Artist.” *Sovereign Bones*,

Eric Gansworth, ed. (Nation Books: NY 2007), 231.

⁸ Mary Priestly. *Grey Canyon and Friends Contemporary American Indian Art*. (Portland Art Museum: Portland, 1981), 3.

strengthen our own identity by keeping in touch with one another, speaking about our art.”⁹

Obviously Smith saw many inadequacies in the way that Native artists were treated in because of their gender or the media and subject matter. These artists were often opposed to what conventional patrons and dealers felt was lucrative. Smith is one of many Native artists who have defied the constraints of authentic American Indian art because these constraints deny an artist’s individualism. This movement was extraordinary. Smith once remarked, “It is difficult for people to understand us. Some are fascinated; some are shocked.”¹⁰

In the 1980, Smith organized the first “Grey Canyon Exhibit” at the Heard Museum. Smith wanted the group to consist of men and women as well as artists who dared to use experimental materials: The original group consisted of Smith, Larry Emmerson, Emmi Whitehorse, Conrad House and Paul Wiletto. The artists involved understood the stereotypes they faced and were forced to break through. United in their cause they helped to abolish perceptions of the Native, conventional style and content until their work was no longer traditionally based but more mainstream.¹¹ The works that were included by each artist in the Grey Canyon exhibition at the Heard Museum consisted of Larry Emmerson’s painted *Dancer Series* that was inspired by the mysterious southwest dancers. They were remnants of the past and images still prevalent

⁹ Ed Montini. “In a Group, Indian Artists Grow as Individuals.” *Leisure and the Arts. The Arizona Republic*. February 3, 1981.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Erin Younger. “Grey Canyon Group: 5 Contemporary Indian Artists.” *The Heard Museum Newsletter*. Jan/ Vol 24. No. 3. (Jan/ Feb 1981), 3.

today. Emmi Whitehorse made collages from handmade papers, horsehair, twigs, hand ground sands and natural dyes. They were organic and fragile in their composition and nature.¹² Conrad House created painted porcelains that were similar to Peruvian altarpieces. Pula Willetto created cast plaster sculptures entitled “Saturday Night Indians after George Segal.”¹³ Finally Smith exhibited a pastel and acrylic series entitled “Imagery from The Plains.” The series was a blend of “narrative pictographs, abstract forms and changing color.”¹⁴

These artists were breaking barriers in their art and their activism. Wendy Wilson of the Santa Fe Reporter reported on a 1980 exhibition at the Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe. She said:

There is a terrific show at the Wheelwright Museum, 704 Camino Lejo. The museum, which usually restricts itself to traditional art, has broken from custom- and put up a show of contemporary Indian art by the Grey Canyon Group, and a strong show it is...all the artists live in the Grey of Albuquerque...Each is competent artist whose work would stand alone outside the group.¹⁵

Dr. Larry Emmerson is now a visiting professor and consultant for Native American scholars and collaborators at San Diego State University. He is an active

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mary Priestly. *Grey Canyon And Friends Contemporary American Indian Art*, 1981. Published in conjunction with the exhibition “Grey Canyon And Friends Contemporary American Indian Art” shown at the Portland Art Museum. n.p.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Wendy Wilson. “Scientific Birds and Drunk Indians.” *The Santa Fe Reporter*. October 23, 1980.

lecturer and his current research consists of the decolonized notions of Dine [Navajo] education.¹⁶ Emmi Whitehorse is a very successful Navajo artist who employs an “Expressionist style combined with Euro-American fine art traditions.”¹⁷ Conrad House, 1956-2001,” sought to free himself from his Navajo / Oneida childhood in New Mexico, House immersed himself in unfamiliar influences by traveling through Europe and educating himself as a mainstream artist. He was therefore exposed to an extensive variety of artistic possibilities. Including a vast, customary beadwork of the Crow and Blackfoot people and pottery patterns of the Anasazi as well the more modern, European authority of Picasso, Joseph Cornell, and Mondrian ”¹⁸

Artists joined who joined the group later include Harry Fonseca, 1946-2006. A highly acclaimed Native painter known for his humor, Fonseca’s most well known creations were known the infamous creatures Coyote and Rose. These humorous characters made us take note our faults and mistakes with a smile. They became a popular symbol for Fonseca and his work.¹⁹

Another late addition is Ed Singer. He is a Navajo Artist born and raised on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. He continues to make art and is known for his outstanding draftsmanship and pragmatic view of Navajo life, a view often mixed with

¹⁶ G. Ballard. “Kumeyaay Indians” Native American House NAH. (Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign).

<http://www.kumeyaay.info/whoswho/bios/larryemerson.html>

¹⁷ Joseph Tragott. “Native American Artists and the Postmodern Cultural Divide.” *Art Journal*. Vol. 51. No.3 (Fall 1992), 41.

¹⁸ “Conrad House.” Exhibits USA.

http://maaa.org/ehi_usa/exhibitions/house/conrad_house.html

¹⁹ Mariah Sacoman. Press release. <http://www.harryfonseca.com/news/index.htm>

clever humor ensuing from the juxtaposition of traditional Navajo ways and contemporary mainstream life. Singer is the first Navajo artist to show his people as they really exist, living their day-to-day lives under difficult conditions in a White Man's world.²⁰

Linda Lomahaftewa, who continues to paint today, is an influential teacher and arts educator. She held the positions of instructor at the San Francisco Art Institute and as a teaching assistant (1971-1975) and she was an assistant professor of Native American Art at California State College Sonoma, in Rohnert Park, California, 1971-1974, and she also taught at the University of California, Berkeley in the Native American Studies Department (1974-1976). Residing currently in Santa Fe, New Mexico she effectively balances her career as a productive artist and professor.²¹

George Longfish, (Seneca/Tuscarora) was born in Oshweken, Ontario, Canada. Longfish was a professor of Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis until his retirement in spring 2003. Others include, Karita Coffey, Lois Sonskit and Felice Lucero Giaccardo, a practicing Pueblo artist now lives in Washington, D.C and who through her art “interprets the contradictions of life in terms of the mythic past.”²²

All of the artists had “day jobs,” so they were not reliant upon the revenue from their art sales. For example Larry Emmerson started a community school at Shiprock, New Mexico where classes were taught in Navajo and medicine men were instructors of herbal medicine. Emmi Whitehorse, artist, writer and poet taught art classes at

²⁰Western Graphics Workshop, Inc. <http://www.westerngraphics.com/singer.html>

²¹ Institute of American Indian Art www.iaia.edu/college/_lindalomahaftew

²² Joseph Tragott, 41.

Albuquerque Indian school, and Paul Willeto was the founder of the first art department at the Navajo Community college in Tsaile, Arizona. It was common for the artists to travel to places where young Native scholars and artists congregated. They provided support for each other and mentored other Native artists.

Regarding the Grey Canyon exhibition, Erin Younger a curator at The Heard Museum in Phoenix, stated in the Heard Museum Newsletter,

If a common experience could be generalized, it has revolved around the expectation held by non-Indians that 'Indian Art' is still clearly identifiable and that anything else is too difficult to categorize as invalid. The quandary faced by the Grey canyon Group is not new but the perseverance of the members and their individual success in combining personal and ethnic iconography with contemporary art idioms has been significant. Not only are they moving beyond the decades—old stereotype of Indian art, they are moving beyond the Scholder-Gorman model of the 60s and 70s.²³

The “Grey Canyon Group” exhibited throughout the United States and Europe, including: The Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, the art gallery at the University of ND, Grand Forks, SD, The Southern Plains Museum, Anadarko, OK, The Sioux Land Heritage Museum, Sioux Falls, SD, Galleria de Cavalina, Venice, Italy, Wheelwright Museum, Santa Fe, NM, the Gallery Upstairs, Berkeley, CA, the Portland Art Museum, the K. Phillips Gallery in Denver, the Droll/ Kolpert Gallery in New York City, and

²³ Erin Younger. “Grey Canyon Group: 5 contemporary Artists.” *The Heard Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 24. No. 3. (Jan / Feb, 1981), n.p.

Albuquerque Museum Plaza Gallery. According to Lawrence Abbott they also exhibited in churches, and banks.²⁴

Smith speaks about the impact of Grey Canyon, “Just to give an accounting of how powerful a small group can be, I was at a conference in North Dakota when a Menominee man asked me if I knew the Grey Canyon Artists. When I said yes, I founded them, he was obviously very pleased. He asked how many artists there were in this famous group, fifty, maybe more? I responded with a smile that ‘on good days there were ten members and on bad days there might be four.’”²⁵

By 1983, most of the participants obtained their various degrees from different schools and the group slowly disbanded. As Mary Priestly so aptly stated, “Although the original bonds between them have been loosened by time and distance, their compass is even now expanding as other urban Indians across the country join the mainstreams of contemporary art.”²⁶

Smith managed to encourage the foundation of arena for artists to characterize their cultural identity through individual and cooperative artistic creation and activism. She was a catalyst for the proliferation and propagation of contemporary Native art in the 1970’s and beyond making it possible to make a difference.

Coup Marks

²⁴ Lawrence Abbott. *I Stand in the Center of the Good*. (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and London, 1994), 220.

²⁵ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, “The Story of a Cultural Arts Worker Artist.” *Sovereign Bones*, Eric Gansworth, ed. (NY: Nation Books), 233.

²⁶ Mary Priestly, n.p.

In the 1980's Smith continued her work as activist, curator and promoter of contemporary Native art. She organized a group of artists on the Flathead reservation entitled "COUP- MARKS." According to one account, COUP MARKS is an intertribal organization comprised of Native American artists and craftsmen living on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana.²⁷

In 1982, the founding members met with Smith who by then was a well-known artist and she advised the group about the formation of a marketing cooperative. The founding members included Lorraine Big Crane, (Osage/ Blackfeet); Ruth Silverstone, (Salish/Kickapoo); Dwight Billedeaux, (Blackfeet); Michael Big Crane, (Flathead/ Navajo); J. E Matt, (Flathead); and Sylvia Matt, (Sioux/ Cheyenne). The cooperative's objectives were to provide promotion and sales of their work for Reservation artisans and craftspeople and to promote the manufacture of traditional arts and crafts while protecting and conserving traditional cultural art and practices. Although all of the artists may still be working, Mr. Billedeaux is the only artist, aside from Smith, who has information available. He continues to make sculpture from found objects and for a period of time he taught traditional arts at the Salish Kootenai College on the Flathead reservation. Perhaps his continuing success as an artist inspired him to re-assemble the group with new members.

The original COUP MARKS groups exhibited at the American Indian Community House in New York City in 1983. Via Gambaro Gallery in Washington, D.C

²⁷ COUP MARKS: *An Exhibition*. (Browning Montana: Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Museum of the Plains Indian and Crafts Center, 1984), n.p. Published in conjunction with the US Department of the Interior.

in 1983 and the Native American Art Display and Sale in Great Falls, Montana in March 1984 as well as other venues.²⁸

To this day the group credits Smith with their success. Dwight Billedeaux re-established the organization in November 2006 and now leads the group. He is the only remaining original member. During a phone interview he conceded, “Jaune was the one who started it all. She knew a lot of people in the art world and was able to help us secure funds. She took us under her wing. Because of her successful artistic career she helped us get funding and she helped us become known as a group. As a group we were much stronger than one individual and she helped us realize that. She helped us get shows in New York, Washington, D.C and Denver.”²⁹

The group officially disbanded around 1986 for several reasons.³⁰ Today they reconstituted and are still in existence. Members include Billedeaux, (Blackfeet), a sculptor. Mary Adele Rogers, who is (Salish/- Kootenai), does beadwork, quillwork, jewelry making, candle making, quilting, cross stitching and weaving. Glenn D. Aragon, Sr., (Eastern Shoshone/ Pend d’Oreille) is a sculptor. Timothy Ryan, a (Salish/ Kootenai) member founded AST an organization dedicated to teaching and preserving the traditional ways of tribal life such as tool making, fire building and traditional use of hide, barks, and plants. And Alex R. Courville, (Salish/- Kootenai) who is an artist who draws with pen and pencil. They have been successful at obtaining various tribal and

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Dwight Billedeaux > Personal communication to author.

³⁰ Mr. Billedeaux stated that corruption broke up the original group. Money was disappearing and the group could not agree anymore so they disbanded.

government grants and they hope to re-new the original success and fervor that they enjoyed under the guidance of Smith.

“The People’s Show”

In 1982 Smith first saw Jesse Cooday’s photography at the American Indian Community house in New York City. Cooday is a Tlinglit artist. Cooday's art has appeared at the Gallery of the American Indian Community House (New York City), Denver Art Museum , New York Arts Magazine Online Exhibit and The Street Level Gallery (Glasgow Scotland). Smith was so impressed she was determined to put together a show of Native photography, something that had not been accomplished at that point

Smith spent three years locating fifteen other photographers to exhibit in the show, but then Smith was unable to find a museum willing to show the work. Fortunately Rosemary Ellison, the director of the Southern Plains Museum in Anadarko, Oklahoma recruited photographers from her area, and she edited a brochure to accompany the exhibit. Peter Jemmison, a Seneca painter who was schooled in New York and Italy booked the exhibition for the American Indian Community House where was then working. The exhibition was extended for an extra month because of its vast appeal. Next Joe Fedderson, a printmaker of Colville heritage, and a printmaking instructor at Evergreen College in Olympia Washington, as well as a long time friend and associate of Smith’s, persuaded The Silver Image gallery in Seattle to host the exhibition. The director of the Atlatl, Erin Younger, convinced the Heard Museum in Phoenix to take the show. By this time the exhibition known as “The People’s Show” and included works by over sixty Native American photographers.³¹ Smith had succeeded in producing and

³¹ Lawrence Abbott, 221.

promoting the very first exhibition of Native American photography. It may not have been recognized as a formal cooperative per se but when one considers the communal work that went into organizing, publicizing and exhibiting the work, it certainly demonstrated a cooperative effort. This was a non-profit exhibition and it created spaces for previously unrecognized artists. Also it could be viewed as a cooperative society owned by its members who worked vigorously to have their work shown.

“The People’s Show” offered a genuine departure from the stereotypical images that only served the interests and fantasies of the white population and prolonged the notions of the Native American as a "noble red man" a "vanishing race", an "uncivilized savage" in need of "salvation.” In the face of settlement, modernization and assimilation, the Native Americans previously had little power over the way they were represented or their interpretation. Edward Curtis, often viewed as one of the foremost photographers of the “vanishing race,” used props, fake regalia, and various artificial items to make his photographs more appealing. He was one of many photographers who took advantage of the Native population for profit and propagated falsehoods that many viewers still don’t know are historically inaccurate. (See glossary).

Smith now recognized as a forerunner in Native art cooperatives and an activist once said, “my art is my voice-it is a process of giving back that is a tribal responsibility. You share your good fortune and fame.”³² Smith’s activism is consistent with the Native American vision that everything you give away, every bit of assistance that you offer, comes back to you; selflessness is the key to true happiness and success.

Smith: Early Works from 1983-1989

Smith's works from 1983-1989 are treated here because they were completed during or after the times of her involvement in cooperative. Between 1976 and 1989 Smith often worked in series. During these years she produced thirty different series, most were composed on paper with charcoal, oil, pencil, acrylic and pastel. Her predominant subjects were landscapes, nature, animals and petroglyphs.

Red Rock Canyon, (fig. 3-1), from 1983 is an abstracted landscape that typifies Smith's work in the 1980s.³² The earth tone colors of browns, grays and red are reflective of the canyon. It denotes a specific site as implied by the title. Yet, like a majority of Smith's landscapes it is not easily identifiable. It offers an illusion of space. The rough-hewn lines scraped through the media might signify desecration or maybe even the rough angular rocks of the canyon walls. Lawrence Abbott notes, "Environmental concerns and perceptions of the land have informed and continue to inform Smith's works."³³ In the lower right corner is a horse that almost seems to be vanishing into the turbulent background. The roiling, dripping paint seen throughout the composition again seems to symbolize destruction or eradication. The entire scene seems to evaporate, on the previously vast, unspoiled land and its natural, wild inhabitants in the process of extinction.

In 1986 Smith produced a work entitled *Quarter Horse* (fig. 3-2).³⁴ It was featured in the exhibition *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* at the Bernice

³² Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. October 12, 2007.

³³ Lawrence Abbott, 209.

³⁴ *Quarter Horse*, 1986, is pastel on paper and it measures 30" x 22."

Steinbaum Gallery. It is carefully divided into four quadrants each containing a semi-abstracted horse's head, perhaps alluding to the quarter horse. It also signifies the four directions so important in Native American societies and religion. It could also imply the four seasons. The horses are drawn as angular abstraction; their figures are reduced but their form is emphasized with a graceful and simplified fluidity. In the upper left quadrant, jutting into the picture plane is a horse's head that slants into the frame of the quadrant with its head pointed downward. Above its head is a flowing stream of abstracted petroglyph figures and human-like images. Interspersed between the figures are zigzags, circles and angular lines. In the upper right quadrant the second horse's head appears before angular forms resembling mountains and sharp, jagged lines resembling bolts of lightning. In the lower left corner another horse's head. The final horse's head, in the lower right quadrant is surrounded by pictographic images and randomly drawn lines. This work speaks to Smith's childhood and her father's work as a horse trainer. This work underscores the central role horses have played in Smith's life and work. Is noteworthy because it testifies to Smith's fascination with horses.

Pepper's Jazz (fig.3-3) from 1985³⁵ it is a vividly colored, angular, abstracted composition. In the central portion of the composition are two figures that appear to be dancing. They are nearly human in form but they have rabbit ears. They are very similar to petroglyphic figures of rabbits found on cliff faces and in caves in Peterboro, Canada, near Southern Ontario. They appear again in her later art. Rabbits signify fecundity and in some tribal cultures they are seen as trickster figures. Here they appear to be performing some type of ritual dance. In the lower left corner there appears to be a black and white

³⁵ *Pepper's Jazz*, 1985, is oil on canvas and it measures 72" x 76."

striped snake. In Native culture, Snakes can be associated with numerous healing and fertility rituals. They are connected with lightning, the male organ, speed, and stealth. Accordingly the background is jagged, zigzagged with lightening bolts of bright colors, with scratched and re-worked designs and motifs. In Native cultures snakes can be associated with numerous healing and fertility rituals. They are connected with lightning, the male organ, speed and stealth. Some associate the word “jazz” with sex, further imbuing the mind with ideas of fertility and reproduction.

Smith’s work entitled *Cactus* (fig.3-4) 1988 ³⁶ reminds us there is a certain ambiguity about Smith’s art. One must possess a general knowledge of her life and Native American art and culture to fully understand the impact of her visual statements, but anyone can enjoy her work. This work is a complex expression of Native American symbolism, culture and humor. The composition is a fantastic mixture of images. At the upper portion of the piece is a form resembling railroad tracks, or scars on the land, perhaps signaling the railroad encroaching on undisturbed land. In the upper left is a turtle moving slowly across the composition. In Native American culture turtles are symbols of longevity and knowledge. Some Native peoples believe that turtles brought humans into this earthly realm on their back. In the upper left are green figures perhaps meant to be trees or cacti. Some of these figures also resemble crosses, perhaps indicative of the missionaries who traveled across the land about the same time as the railroads. In the lower right is a pickup truck. This is surely an image from Smith’s childhood and her nomadic life with her father. As we have seen horses are also symbols of Smith’s childhood and her father’s occupation. Even the title is suggests something beautiful that

³⁶ *Cactus, 1988, is oil on canvas and measures 60” x 50.”*

should have remained untouched, like the land that Smith grew up in. In summary this work is a testament to the environment and the knowledge that is needed to protect it. The themes of the environment, nature and the land remain constants in Smith's work.

Smith's work is imbued with a fervent, unrelenting socio-political commentary that speaks to historical and current cultural appropriation maltreatment of Native American peoples, while underscoring their sustained importance. *Salish*, from the same year as *Cactus*, shows Smith continuing to explore modernist abstraction with pictographs interspersed throughout.³⁷ Smith utilizes objects, animals and utensils important to her cultural heritage, for example the central vessel that is the type used by the Indigenous people of her heritage. Smith employs rough drawing, and the insertion and layering of numerous images that are curiously combined into an intricate vision. This representation is important because it reveals that Smith is concerned with the connection between people and the living world as well as their connection to ancient belief systems that are often forgotten. She suggests the ancient beliefs should live on.

Smith's work *Rainbow* (fig.3-5) from 1989 appears subtly innocuous on first glance but was selected as a poster for President Clinton's inauguration.³⁸ Close observation shows that this is a work that has subtle political and environmental significance. Central to the composition are brightly hued, arch-shaped passages that appear to be an emerging rainbow. Done in vigorous, uneven, broad strokes, of red, yellow, blue and brown, the shapes draw the viewer's attention to the center of the canvas. Above and between the arches are lines of scrawled, black, hand written text. The

³⁷ *Salish*, 1988, is oil on canvas and measures 60" x 50." There is no illustration.

³⁸ *Rainbow*, 1989, is oil and mixed media in canvas and it measures 66" x 84."

text reads, “For whatever happens to the plants and animals also happens to the humans.” Beneath the arches are three boxes of red, yellow and blue. Each box contains or imprisons petroglyphic figures of a tree, a horse and a stick-like human figure, painted in a rudimentary style. They appear to be captured in time, awaiting release or revitalization. The brown arch appears to be separate from the characteristically colored rainbow hues. It could be read as the earth rising up to meet the colored arcs much as a rainbow meets the earth following rain. In the brown arch there are many different objects that might recall cultural items such as drums, vessels and spiral shapes significant for Native cultural survival. They might also represent elements of trash and waste that threaten our environment.

Rainbow is a colorful work with a somber message. It appears to have been scraped and repainted many times, causing an uneven wash of mixed colors. Behind the rainbow is a cloudy grayish blue. On the left side the background is dark, dull and solemn. But as the color spreads to the right side of the canvas it becomes light, hopeful, and optimistic. A rainbow is a sign of renewal and hope that is directly tied to the text Smith integrates into her work. It is not a particularly Native American symbol. Perhaps Smith is trying to convey that all hope is not lost if people heed the words and wisdom of Chief Seattle’s speech, the implied source of the text in the image. (See glossary.)

Smith did several series on the theme of Chief Seattle and the enduring wisdom of the one hundred and fifty-three-year-old oration. Smith has always been concerned with the environment and this work conveys her apprehension about the future of the earth. If the plants and animals cannot survive, neither will the humans. Smith’s early works on Chief Seattle are important because of her use of text, a hallmark of her later work.

Smith's early works are well executed and subtle. They exude a simplicity are strikingly uncomplicated and excellently executed. That they are not her boldest works soon becomes evident in her later paintings and drawings. Smith's later works reveal new ironic and satirical ways of dealing with stereotypes, humor and politics.

CHAPTER IV

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith Post 1990: Expressing the Tensions of Satire, Stereotypes, War, Environmental issues, and Politics

Smith's later works, from 1990 to the present, show a commitment similar to that expressed by her multiple professions as curator, activist, mentor, public speaker, and artist. During this period she found a heightened commitment to her treatment of subject matter and its evolution from stereotypes and misrepresentations of Native culture to governmental propaganda, the futility of war, the necessity of socio-political justice, the pursuit for cultural equality, and exposing the inaccuracies of Euro-American-based history. Feminist themes in Smith's work have been treated exhaustively by other scholars. This chapter will be assembled thematically, since returns to certain themes throughout her career: stereotypes, satire, native icons and regalia, and finally commercialism and Euro-centric influences.

With the changing world, Smith finds it necessary to re-enforce and modify her messages to counteract the shifting worldviews and rapidly varying public attitudes. Smith's use of texts ranges from the playful to the ironic. Major themes are often brought into play in Smith's works after 1990 through collage--a technique that had been developed by many of her predecessors from Picasso to Rauschenberg. Drawing on history, psychology, folklore, linguistics, and anthropology, Smith redefines preconceptions of Native American life and experience, preconceptions of the Native

American experience, or as she puts it: “My work explores the ironies of myths and icons that abound in mainstream America about American Indians.”¹

Stereotypes

Modern Times

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith explores the issues of racism in a series of powerful images selected for analysis are *Modern Times*. *Modern Times* (fig.4-1) is rich with symbolism and is a visual expression of mythology, cultural politics, and humor.² The composition has a fruit label collaged on the top that states, “hi Yu brand apples Wenatchee Washington, one bushel by volume, produce of the USA.” The label includes a stylized Native American head complete with headdress. Beneath the label is a simple outline of a man’s suit, with boots and briefcase. The figure is outlined in black and white with a fruit label as a head. Together the two images form a central figure --part label, part print. In the lower corner, near the figure’s feet is a cartoon-like, striped cat. To the left of the central figure is a plant with text underneath that reads, “*Cornus Nuttali*--Flowering Dogwood.” In the upper right register is a pictograph figure of a snake. Behind the central figure is a very vague or lightly printed stick man or petroglyphic figure.

The artist saw the label as comparable to racist advertising figures such as Aunt Jemima or the Land of Lakes Indian maiden.³ It is viewed as the continuing status of stereotypes involving minorities today. The label is a symbolic icon for the capitalist gain

¹Charlotte Townsend Gault. “Let X=Audience” in *Reservation X*, ed. Gerald McMaster. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1998), 41.

²*Modern Times*, 1993, is a lithograph produced with collage, *chine-collé*, lithography and printed text on arches paper that measures 30” x 22 ”.

³Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal Communication with author. April 10-18, 1999.

made by the use of Native American images that are outdated and racist but still in use. It implies that Native people are deprived of their identity because mainstream society refuses to see them accurately, without stereotypes. If you consider the suit, the sense of invisibility increases. Natives read this figure as a “sell out.” To the American Indian an “apple” is a person who is red on the outside but white on the inside. It is someone who complies with white society and denies his or her own culture. Smith relates that the figure is a symbol of the dual roles that Indians play in modern life⁴

The plant, *Cornus nuttalli*, or dogwood, is a medicinal plant for most Native American tribes. It is an environmental statement. To a Native American viewer it adds a tone of spirituality and tradition or as the author states, “Even though we are modern Indians we look to forms of our traditional stabilization in the White world.”⁵

According to popular Euro-centric beliefs revolving around the Christian faith, the cross of the crucifixion was built of dogwood. As the story goes, during the time of Jesus, the dogwood was larger and stronger than it is now. Following his crucifixion, Jesus changed the plant to its current form: he shortened it and twisted its branches to assure an end to the use of the plant for the creation of crosses, and he transformed the flower into a symbol of the crucifixion itself. The four white petals are cross-shaped, which are said to symbolize the four corners of the cross, each bearing a rusty notch resembling a nail; the red stamens of the flower symbolize the crown of thorns, and the groups of red fruit represent the blood of Jesus. In addition to symbolizing traditional Native medicine, it could represent the encroachment of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Euro-American religion into the traditional Native world. Aside from the dogwood plant other unusual elements have been placed in the print including a cat. The cat is oddly out of place. It might be a humorous interjection added to break the picture's somber tone. Smith says, "cats were brought to this country by Europeans. Indians always had dogs. But in modern times, you'll see cats as our pets."⁶

The pictograph in the upper right register resembles cave paintings from the southwest United States. The central figure with the headdress is facing the pictograph or gazing in its direction. Is it simply a traditional element of illustration? According to the artist, the central figure, though modern must look to his past.⁷

Smith reverses and parodies traditional issues and subject matter. In the upper left register are the faint words "do the stomp dance." The stomp dance is actually a ceremony performed by Oklahoma tribes in celebration of green corn. Non- Natives might read it as some form of modern dance. In actuality, the artist's father used the term to tease his children when they were angry, saying, "now don't go do the stomp dance."

⁸The stick man behind the central figure is a reminder of Indigenous Peoples' journey from the past to the present. The figure is trying to remain modern while maintaining his traditional heritage. Smith sees it as a reminder of how Natives celebrate their ceremonies.⁹ The upper background register is black while the lower register is tan.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Could it signify good versus evil? Is the darkness of assimilation and modernity is consuming Native culture?

Smith describes the central figure as a lawyer like those that she sees in the airports in the southwest. She explains that the cat and the lawyer are symbols of the today's world and the dogwood is a symbol of the past.¹⁰ Smith is reminding both Native and non-Native viewers how important it is to look to the future while keeping traditional Indigenous beliefs intact.

I SEE RED: CHIEF SLEEPY EYE WAR SHIRT

Beginning in 1992 Smith began a series of about thirty paintings and drawings entitled *I SEE RED*. The media used were: *Char- Koosta Newspaper* pages (Smith's reservation paper) with charcoal drawings of picto-forms, and red and occasionally dripping green acrylic paint and gesso. These works were inspired by activities around the 1992 quincentenary of Columbus. Smith wanted to present an up-to-date view of American Indian people. She felt the newspaper was the most direct way to do that. Smith was aware that Picasso, Schwitters, Braque, and the Russian Constructivists had used a lot of newspaper in their collages.¹¹ I will examine one of these multiple works as a case study.

Like *Modern Times*, the central focus of the composition *I SEE RED: CHIEF SLEEPY EYE WAR SHIRT* (fig.4-2) is a food label that reads, "Sleepy Eye Brand

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. August 08, 2007.

Chief Sleepy Eye, 30 dozen eggs A.J Pietrus and Sons Co. Sleepy Eye, Minn.”¹² in the center of a red, yellow, and green bull’s-eye is a bust portrait of a “stoic” Native with a single feather tied to the back of his hair which is divided into two braids. Chief Sleepy Eye was a real person who lived in Minnesota. He was friendly with traders and today many advertising items with his likeness still exist. The wooden view of the chief represented on the advertisement label draws attention to the unpleasant and enduring stereotypes that American Indian people confront day after day.

The label is centered in a red outline of a man’s war shirt. The outline appears hastily painted, as if done in a dash, perhaps trying to provide protection under hurried conditions. The red color represents the bloodshed of countless Native people or as a color of power and protection. It is an attempt to protect Native peoples from further cultural degradation.¹³ The geometric, triangular designs along the top register of the work that resemble Native blanket designs. Red paint drips, pours and puddles down the composition. Two yellow stripes cut through the shapes.

Beneath the shirt is a small animal resembles a raccoon. In the Cree language the word “raccoon” means, “They pick up things.”¹⁴ Cree history and language is part of Smith’s heritage. Perhaps this means the animal is intuitively aware of the changing

¹² *I See Red: Chief Sleepy Eye War Shirt* from 1992 is mixed media and collage on paper and it is 41.5 x 29.5 inches

¹³ Most Native people believe that the color red is a designation of one the four directions; red meaning east. Many Natives pray in the morning to the east. Some believe it means the color of triumph or success or as mentioned blood. Is also a symbol of the sacred fire of life.

¹⁴ Virginia C. Holgren. “Raccoons In Folklore, History and Today’s Backyards.” <http://www.loomcom.com/raccoons/info/namesake.html>.

word of Natives. As the world changes animals are often more aware than humans. For example many people report animals sense catastrophic natural occurrences before they happen. Animals know that the environment, and therefore the world, is aware of the drastic climatic changes in weather and the expansion of cities, urban sprawl, and the loss of vast areas of land. It could also be a symbol of tradition and the disappearance of animals that were once plentiful. They must resort to living in areas that threaten and change their way of life. Smith may also be inferring that the Euro-Americans that invaded Native territories “picked up things” or removed them or used them for their own values that differed from that of the American Indians. The raccoon is standing in a green blob or splash of paint decorated with small dots of red paint. Beneath the animal and to the side is a bicycle, symbolizing modern forms of transportation. In the left lower register is a splash of red paint and corresponding to it in the lower right register is a green dash or globule of paint symbolizing the rapidly changing environment. The portion of the title “*I SEE RED*” can be an expression of anger at the degradation Natives face such as being stereotyped as “the red man.” Many Native people believe that the seventh generation of Natives, since the arrival of Anglo Americans, today’s generation of youth, will return to power. In this case, the strength of the war shirt is a sacred token meant to protect further generations from pain, degradation and stereotypical labeling. The title means that Native people are slowly reappearing as members of modern society instead of remaining cultural stereotypes.

Trade (Gifts for Trading Lands with White People)

Trade (Gifts for Trading Lands with White People) (fig.4-3) is Smith's reaction to the quincentennial anniversary of Columbus' attempted expedition to America.¹⁵ It battles stereotypes on a much different basis than the earlier works discussed in this section. The message that Smith conveys meets the controversy of Columbus' arrival head on. As an alternative to mainstream American "idolization" of Columbus, Smith commemorates the preexisting Native cultures and educates viewers about the accomplishments and ingenuity of the peoples who inhabited America before the so-called discovery. She moves beyond traditional means of expressing Native views on the subject by combining traditional objects with items that reflect the dominant stereotypes. The work is a combative piece that plays on the lack of knowledge of Euro-Americans and their long held belief systems.

The work depicts an outline of a type of large, traditional canoe once used by Flathead Natives and explorers alike. It is suspended in a sea of a layered, dripping, sumptuously painted canvas. The snippets of text are multi-layered and complex. They are used as an educational tool that is articulate and cross culturally enlightening. Hanging above the canvas, much like a trickster or the wily gambler that waits to deal with weary travelers to the afterworld in many tribes, Smith offers trade goods such as tasteless and tacky curio shop items that exploit and degrade Native Americans: sports mascot items, red man chewing tobacco and gaudy souvenir headdresses, toy tomahawks,

¹⁵*Trade (Gifts for Trading Lands with White People)*, 1992, oil and collage on canvas, with other materials and measures 60 x 170". It is located in the permanent collection at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

and cheap, machine-made beaded belts and headbands alongside other culturally degrading items. These are items that dominant mainstream society's purchases of souvenirs of America's first citizens. Much as the early settlers traded trinkets to peoples who trusted them, Smith offers pictorial items to unaware "travelers" and viewers that yearn for flashy items without understanding the values of Native American peoples.

Satire and Animals

While non-Native art historians tend to concentrate on Smith's reliance on Euro-American painting techniques, I would argue that while influenced by previous artists, Smith's style, her defiance of misconceptions that surround stereotypes, and her lack of desire to prosper from her efforts sets her far apart from what I view as the self-absorbed truth seeking existentialism practiced by the New York School to which she is so often compared.

Genesis

The central figure of *Genesis*¹⁶ is a bison or buffalo (fig.4-4). The centrality of the animal figure connotes its importance to Native culture historically and in the present. The buffalo is sacred to most Native cultures, especially those of the plains areas. Not only did buffalo exist for subsistence, as food, clothing tools and the like; to some they supplied plentifully for others, they inspired Natives to live in harmony with mother earth, they taught the importance of giving altruistically from the heart, and they encouraged the meaning of sacrifice and the sacredness of life. It has also been

¹⁶ *Genesis*, 1993, is oil collage, and mixed media on canvas. It is in diptych format and measures 60 x 100". It is located in the permanent collection at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia.

prophesized that the birth of a white buffalo will change the earth and the Native population. Nine white buffaloes have been born since 2003. Smith often alludes to a return to a renewed Native culture. Smith and many others believe that people will eventually realize that Native views are more conducive to keeping the environment sound and the world safe. But she acknowledges a general tendency to deny this perceived truth.

The title, *Genesis*, means a coming into being. Smith presumably desires viewers to realize that turning back to traditional ways offers a new way of being, a new standard of existence. The simple outline of the buffalo is surrounded by symbols and text. The vigorously applied juxtaposed masses of vibrant and somber colors force us to abandon the familiar. Surrounding the central figure are symbols from traditional sources and sacred sites. Photographs of Natives in traditional clothing and formal poses are layered among blotches of paint and text. Near the hindquarter of the buffalo text reads, “To air is human,” a pun on the declining environment.

There is also a bingo card, a mainstay of reservation life and entertainment. It adds a bit of humor and the day-to-day reality of reservation life to those who truly understand Native culture. It could represent present day issues of gambling on the reservation or the risk the earth’s populace faces everyday they gamble with the forces of nature.

Texts near the head of the buffalo read, “You’ve come to the right place”, possibly implying that a return to Native ways and a knowledge of Native struggles is leading us to the right path. One headline reads, “L.A. riots could prompt new focus on poverty in Indian country.” Poverty on Indian reservations is appalling. For example the

Pine Ridge reservation has the highest murder rate and infant mortality rate per capita.

The average income is \$3200.00 and the life expectancy of males is forty-five. Smith puts these issues before our eyes.

On the left there are multiple images of coyote. The buffalo is firmly standing on a hand written text that reads, “In the Beginning Amotken Created Coyote and assigned to him the welfare of...” The sentence remains unfinished, as if coyote’s mission to maintain the welfare of the human race, including Natives and non-Natives alike is also ongoing. Amotken the chief divine being of the Salish American Indian tribe, lives in the Native equivalent of paradise, isolated and alone. He is an elderly man, astute and caring, with never-ending empathy for his creations. Coyote is his emissary and messenger. Coyote appears here as our moral guide. He urges us to look to the past for answers to today’s problems. He also eliminates ignorance with his sly ways and he draws our attention as he slinks off the edge of the canvas. Why is he leaving? Smith is in many ways as a modern day coyote. Not only is she teaching us about Native culture and the enduring tribulations of Native Americans, she is warning us to care for the earth and to acknowledge that our world is facing multiple dilemmas with the rapidly changing environment and our lack of awareness about all of Amotken’s creations. Smith’s philosophy might be compared to that of George Santayana, who said, “ Those who do not remember the past are destined to repeat it.”.

Celebrate 40,000 Years of American Art

Celebrate 40,000 Years of American Art (fig.4-5) was completed with the

assistance of master printer Kevin Garber at Island Press.¹⁷ The print shows a marching group of rabbits positioned as striding into the right foreground of the composition. They are dark, anonymous, and almost frightening in their somber appearance. They appear to be rallying into a single-file line ready to tread off the paper and into the viewer's personal space. They are depicted as shadow figures with little detail. The composition is done in variations of blacks, grays and whites. The background appears similar to malleable rock. It is scratched, striated, and dotted, as if it were actually carved or painted on stone. Smith created the images to be similar to those from the Peterborough petroglyphs of Ontario, Canada.¹⁸

As previously mentioned, Rabbits can signify fertility and in many Native societies they are trickster figures much like coyote. Native American writer Joy Harjo says, "It is rabbit who subverts damage, turns the world around and laughs and it is the rabbit trickster in all of us who can pick up the pieces and put them together in a manner that makes wonderful and crazy sense."¹⁹ According to Harjo, rabbit has the ability to rectify what is humorless and all of the world's faults and foibles. Rabbits are funny, friendly creatures that Natives and non-Natives are all familiar with from childhood. From literature there is Briar rabbit, Peter rabbit, Br'er Rabbit, Bugs Bunny, and of course the Easter bunny. From film we have Harvey the rabbit, Roger Rabbit and

¹⁷ *Celebrate 40,000 Years of American Art*, 1995, is a collograph done in an edition of 20. It is 79.25 x 54.75".

¹⁸ Peterborough Petroglyphs, Ontario

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/canada/peterborough-petroglyphs.htm>

¹⁹ Joy Harjo. "The Creation Story: The Jaune Quick-to-See Smith Survey." *Subversions and Affirmations*. (Jersey City Museum: Jersey City), 64.

Thumper. People carry rabbit's feet as good luck. The ubiquitous nature of rabbits in American culture and allows Smith to create a cross-cultural message of historical inaccuracies that need to be known.

In Smith's words,

I chose rabbits as an art icon because there is a cultural universality to them throughout the world. Standing rabbits not only appear in petroglyphs in the Americas, (these are from the Peterborough Site in Toronto, Canada), but □in petroglyphs around the world as well. Japanese wood block prints, children's books (including those about -Peter Rabbit), literature (for example, Richard Adam's novel, *Watership Down*, New York:- Avon, 1972), the Easter Bunny, movies, pop culture images, and contemporary art such as Jeff Koons's stainless steel balloon rabbit and Barry Flanagan's bronze standing rabbits all give significance to my choice of art iconography. In educational institutions in this country, reference is often made to the age of America as being two hundred years or five hundred years, but because we still live under the aegis of colonial thinking, its never taken into consideration that some of the world's greatest cultures and cities were here in the Americas for thousands of years--and are still here. This etching is my succinct comment on colonial thinking.”²⁰

War Is Heck

War is Heck, (fig. 4-6) made shortly after the tragedy of 9-11, is a black, white, gray and red composition.²¹ The featured image is a profile of a darkly outlined horse, recalling a traditional war pony. There are also biblical references to horses being symbols of war. In the sixth chapter of the *Book of Revelations* the four horsemen of the apocalypse represent; war, pestilence, death and famine. This particular beast is very similar in build and stance to the horses depicted in the equestrian sculptures that

²⁰ Jaune Quick to See Smith. “Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.” *Frontiers*. (University of Nebraska Press: Nebraska, 2002).

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3687/is_200201/ai_n9058720

(Fulcrum Publishing: Golden Colorado, 1997).

²¹ "War is Heck", 2002, is a lithograph with Chine-Colle on Paper, done in an edition

commemorated war generals and or heroes of combat. Smith may have known Albrecht Dürer's print *Four Men of the Apocalypse* on which Death rides a pale horse and like Smith's horse is pallid and white. It also resembles Dürer's 1505 engraving *The Small Horse*, related to Leonardo DaVinci's Sforza equestrian monument.

The horse has geometric and angular lines drawn through its body. Upon its back is a man that appears to be a traditional ledger book figure. It is a Native figure dressed in Cavalry dress, possibly symbolizing a Native who found it more lucrative to be a scout for the White armies as opposed to suffering on a reservation or being imprisoned. Other Natives viewed scouts as traitors, because they were often sent into battle first to die. The figure on the horse's back has a pair of wings, as if he has gone on to heaven or is no longer earth bound. In the upper right register are four American flags adjacent to each other. Beneath the flags is an image of a bird that is actually a card taken from a Spanish game of *Loteria* or Lottery. In the game of *Loteria* the players choose cards. The person with the card reads the riddle on the card and the other players must figure out the corresponding picture on the card. The card previously mentioned is the number twenty card, called "El Parjaro" or the bird.

The riddle associated with the bird card is "You've got me jumping to it like a bird on a branch."

This small figure has many meanings. *Loteria* is a game of chance, much like war is a pastime of chance. In fact, during the Vietnam war there were lotteries held in which numbers were called on the radio and television that corresponded to your birth date. If your birth date was called, you were automatically drafted without any choice in the matter. The phrase "You've got me jumping to it like a bird on a branch" signifies the

military control over a soldier's ability to make his own choices. He must obey the orders given. A bird on a branch has little choice but to leave safety behind for a fate he has little control over. In the upper right corner and under the horse's right rear foot is another *Loteria* card. It is number thirty-four and it is known as *El- Soldado* or the soldier. The riddle that accompanies the soldier card is "One, two, three the soldier goes to the barracks." Again this indicates that the soldier must follow orders. He has no choice. The horse, a symbol of war inattentively tramples the soldier under its foot. Soldiers are lost each day with little or no regard.

Smith includes other symbols of chance. In the upper center of the composition are four dice all showing the number four. Perhaps this means the four directions. But more than likely it represents an uncontrollable game of luck. Under the horse's flanks and abdomen are bingo cards, another game of risk and luck. It can also be viewed as a game of speculation. Smith is visually vilifying war as a huge hazard, a risk with little or no chance of winning every time. Sooner or later you will be defeated, it is only a matter of time.

Directly behind or printed beneath the horse are two rows of identical buffalos turned towards the left side of the picture. There is also a single buffalo under the horse's rear left foot. It appears as if the horse is trampling the buffalo, with no regard, much like the aforementioned soldier. Whites slaughtered buffalos unmercifully in an attempt to kill off the Native food supply; therefore leaving American Indians to die or surrender from starvation. Buffaloes are known to have poor eyesight and therefore were considered to lack judgment. They were easily killed by running them off cliffs, leaving their bodies in heaps after group annihilation. Because they lacked the proper view, they were no match

for their pursuers and they lacked the foresight to know who had the advantage.

On the bottom and middle left of the composition are cattle. There is a single bovine in the middle of the left side. In the lower register are four rows all alike, marching towards the left, just like the buffalos. Humans can be compared to cattle. They are docile and easily led to their downfall, or in this case their massacre. Similarly soldiers are herded in groups into areas of certain danger and the inevitably the very real possibility of death. Smith suggests many Americans follow the government blindly even after they find out that corruption and dishonesty have placed them in a precarious position that cannot be easily solved.

Down the left side, overlapping the single image of a cow is a splash of vertically dripping, blood-red paint denoting significant injury and definite death by defeat. Smith is telling anyone who will pay attention that dreadful, appalling, unfathomably evil things occur during war. People are treated atrociously, mutilated, tormented, and subjected to the vilest of carnage.

Smith includes text to intensify her message. On the left side is written, "The stone age up close and personal." This refers to the American government's outmoded views on how to handle conflict. Modern ingenuity has not enlightened them. Sometimes leaders are viewed as power hungry and use force, money, power and our children to fight their battles. At the start of the twenty-first century, there are nearly 190,000 Native American military veterans. It is well known that, traditionally, American Indians have the highest record of service per capita when contrasted with other cultural groups.²²

²² Native Americans and the United States Military

www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm

In large letters near the center of the composition from the left are the words “WAR IS HECK.” During the civil war, General Sherman was quoted as saying “war is hell.” Smith has subdued the statement perhaps to suggest that people are not taking the issue seriously. War is hell. Smith recognizes it and she wants the viewer to experience it “up close and personally.”

Native Life

Flathead War Shirt

Flathead War Shirt (fig 4.-7) is a large outlined image of a war shirt.²³ In the nineteenth century war shirts had numerous functions other than existing as simple items of clothing. In many Native communities from all over the United States and Canada, War shirts were hand made to pay tribute to warriors and a select few men with special qualities of leadership and spiritual power. They were made for those with combatant strengths, powers of mysticism and to as a way to bring forth powers attributed to animals. The designs on the shirts illustrated special powers, symbols of remarkable actions and noteworthy battles. Smith employs the shirt as way of protecting and commemorating the events and information she includes in the remaining parts of the composition. The text in the center of the shirt says, “We had tailored suits that didn’t fit this well.”

War shirts were made specifically for one person. Once the person no longer existed, it was believed that the shirt still carried that person’s powers. Tailored suits

²³ *Flathead War shirt* from 1993 is mixed media and oil on canvas and measures 60 x 50.” It is located in The Montclair Museum, in New Jersey.

were of no comparison to sacred and powerful war shirts²⁴

Over the entire composition are layers of newspaper clippings, photographs, and advertisements. It is difficult to distinguish, but the newspaper clippings were probably taken from the *Char-Koosta*, Flathead tribal newspaper. Starting clockwise in the upper left corner is an article that reads, “Culture center host (indecipherable) drum workshops.” These are fairly common ads found in tribal papers. Drums and drum societies are very important to this day. On most reservations, drums are used at Powwows, graduations, sporting events, funerals, 49’s (spontaneous parties that follow powwows) and many other events. (See glossary)

An ad below reads, “Upward Bound seeks teens for summer fun.” Upward Bound sponsored by the federal government offers essential assistance to applicants in preparation for college. Upward Bound assists students from low-income families; first generation college students, first-generation veterans who are planning to go to postsecondary college. The objective of Upward Bound is to raise the rate at which participants finish secondary education and enroll in and finish college programs. Tribal universities like Haskell Indian Nations University recruit students for summer Upward Bound programs to ensure their education matriculation and success. It is a very important way for people without the financial means to ensure that their teenagers get a jump-start on university life and the academic expectations of those universities.

Below that ad is a headline “ We are taking the environment personal” which implies that Smith is relating how Native people have always been conscious of

²⁴ No modern tailor or seamstress could complete such a personalized and consecrated garment.

environmental concerns. Natives have always noticed the changing climate and the disappearance of animals because it is an intrinsic part of their life if they live on the reservation in rural areas.

The upper right register is full of snippets and clippings, such as “the gravy train could derail.” This reference may be a little more obscure. Many Natives depend on what are colloquially known as “commods.” These are food supplies that are handed out monthly. Without this federal assistance, many Native families would suffer. Ironically, the type of food the government hands out is not nutritionally sound for Native people. Many Natives suffer from diabetes and other ailments because their bodies cannot adjust to ingredients such as refined sugar, and white flour. The “gravy train” could derail may refer to human or environmental concerns or political disaster. Other texts in *Flathead War shirt* include the “world according to MTV” and a sales ad for “The Rez Shop and Save.” It advertises Indian music cassettes, beads, Indian themed Christmas carols, shawls and souvenirs along with the introduction of “Indian Discount Fuel.” Most reservations have gas stations equivalent to the Indian Quick-Trip that sell curios, cigarettes and items but their merchandise is geared to appeal to their community desire. “Our mission is only beginning” in the upper center could signal a collective need to correct the ills of society. It could also mean that Native people have a long way to go for equality and to educate others about their traditional ways, many of which could be beneficial to societies through out the world. Beneath an older photograph of a landscape with a stream is the title “the right of Spring.” While this could refer to the celebration of the spring equinox, it also suggests the water issues that plague reservations and other rural areas and it is a pun on the rites of spring. It is well known, however that uranium

and other toxic materials contaminate many reservation water supplies. Running vertically down the right side is a long advertisement for a December powwow. At the bottom are multiple black and white reproductions of walruses. Smith is deliberately making an effort to draw attention to our world's vanishing animals. It is a call to safeguard the identity of numerous animals that are quickly vanishing due to greed and ignorance. There are buffalo, fur seal, and the walrus. Because Smith is Native, appreciates natural life and realizes the Pacific Northwest coast has certain animal's welfare is something that she is aware of and responding to in her art.

An ornate Baroque or Rococo mirror with cherubs adorning each side the mirror could symbolize the Euro-American way of seeing one's reflection. Smith invites people everywhere to take a close look at themselves. Meanwhile, the black and white photograph at the bottom left register of a Native man with a peace pipe and a staff is accompanied by the text, "look for this symbol." Is Smith asking viewers to look at themselves and then consider the state of the world when Natives shared tobacco and made agreements without warfare? The photograph could also be a play on the peace symbol.

In the lower left register is an advertisement that reads, "Wenawatchee Chief" a company for fruit production and shipping that still exists today reminds us of ongoing the undignified use of Native images to sell products. Along the left side of the composition are even more photographs and text. One black and white photo is of a Native family in traditional Euro-American garb. Beneath the image it says, "good medicine." Perhaps Smith is remarking on assimilation. Certainly she is making a comment on how the Euro-Americans wanted the Natives to dress and pose for

photographs, something they were hesitant to do.

Smith's strategy continues along the left side of the composition using another photograph of a Native family in Euro-American garb. The text "good medicine" comments on assimilation and ad for an Indian AIDS hotline. Lastly across the outspread arms and neck of the war shirt are several advertisements. The ads on both sleeves are identical they are Greer tomato ads with stereotypical illustrations of beautiful, young American Indian women. In the center of the neck is an image of a young Indian "maiden" that says "Plen tee color" referring to "tee pees" and people of color. Smith seeks to sensitize us to the fact that the use of Native American stereotype advertising is as offensive as the use of African American stereotypes such as Aunt Jemima.

Fry Bread

Fry bread (fig. 4-8) resembles a totem pole made of uneven orbs of Fry bread that looks as if it stacks to the heavens.²⁵ The spherical shapes of delicious "nourishment" are done in varying shades of russet, tan, and coffee colors of brown. The background is also done in shades of brown, yellow, gray, and splashes of salmon pink. Smith uses her usual style of applying paint in areas of rich impasto applied with a spirited style that results in an energetic fusion of dreary and vibrant colors. The opulent, dazzlingly layered puddles and drips are honey colored and serves to stimulate the mind and the palate.

The text that accompanies the painting informs the viewer of Smith's overall and often oblique commentary. *Fry bread* is stenciled in large, royal blue letters at the top. At the bottom of the composition in the same stenciled lettering is the information "6 Million Now Served." By alluding to McDonald's advertisements, Smith is makes a dual

²⁵ *Fry Bread*, 1995, is mixed media and oil on canvas; 80" x 36."

comment on consumerism and the foods that Native people are forced to rely on for subsistence. Ask almost any Native American and they will describe fry bread as an enjoyable staple of life. When cooked correctly it is golden, light, crispy, fluffy hot, moist and sometimes just a little bit greasy which only enhances the flavor and makes it forbidden and delicious.

Fry bread, uneven dough deep-fried in oil or lard, is an American Indian food found throughout the US. The dough is generally leavened by yeast or baking powder. Fry bread was created in the 1800s, when American Indians were forced onto reservations and given provisions of flour and lard by the government. The American Indians did what they could, and fried the flour in lard. Fry bread has an important role in Native American culture. It is often served both at home and at gatherings like powwows, fundraisers and potluck dinners. More recently, fry bread became the focus of a debate involving its role in obesity and diabetes amongst American Indians. It was food that is easily made from the government provisions that Native people enjoy and rely on today but it is negatively affecting their health.

Similarly, in the fast-food field, the food itself is not the only attraction of the “golden arches.” Customers have come to be pleased about the McDonald's experience: the drive-through, the multi-colored play areas, the grinning unknowing wait-staff waiting for our orders, the playthings and popular films available for purchase at the counter. McDonald' s reportedly spends \$ 1.4 billion a year advertising with personalities from popular culture to encourage possible customers. The familiarity of eating at McDonald' s is almost a way of life, a philosophy of consumerism that is both invasive and clever. It leaves the question, what are the additional characteristics of

consumerism in the United States?²⁶ Smith addresses this question in *Fry Bread*.

In the upper right corner of the work are the words, “For best results cook everything.” Below, “Save your kids from cold cereal.” Again, she criticizes the tendency of people to serve food that is easily prepared with little thought of nourishment. Beneath that is “A Dazzling Assortment of Festivals, Feasts, Fairs and / Feats.” This text is superimposed over another that is partially legible; the remaining words appearing beneath the other label are “on the house?” This is Smith’s satirical way of remarking about America’s eating habits and manner of feeding their children. Much has been made about child obesity, a current health crisis for children. What hasn’t been reported is the tendency of parents to feed their children very little nutritional food. Smith reminds parents need to realize that the preparation of healthy eating food is essential for their children.

A slogan reads, “Haute, Hot, Heaven,” and “IF YOU’RE EXPECTING MORE IN TIMES LIKE THESE YOU’D BETTER WAKE UP.” Haute cuisine is hardly what is served at McDonalds, and it certainly is not cold cereal. Here Smith indicates that people should wake up and take care of their bodies. The rich eat haute cuisine and the poor and working families eat what is fast, cheap, and readily available. Working families, single mothers, and people who live on food assistance programs don’t always have the choice or information to make proper dietary choices. Smith reminds us that the key to healthy bodies is healthy food.

Further down the left side is a newspaper article that announces “Hill County

²⁶ Global Perspectives on Food

<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/ffood7.html>

ordered to pay \$23,000.00 for bias against Indian.” This text stands out from the themes of the others because very seldom are Native people acknowledged for the prejudice they often suffer. At the bottom right corner are the words “Always in Season.” This could refer to the settlement for bias mentioned above. It happens so seldom that it could happen more at any time. It could also be a remark about eating food that is nutritional. Nutritious food is always in season. On the left side is the slogan, “Who’s that kid with the OREO cookie?” This is a clear reminder that consumerism geared toward children, and that a whole industry is evolving to shape adolescent minds to yearn for these commercial goods.

Mid-way down the same side is a small black box with an ad and number for the “American Indian AIDS hotline.” AIDS is a very real crisis on reservations. For American Indians, the increase in the prevalence of AIDS has progressively escalated since the early 1980s, and now AIDS is the ninth leading killer of Native Americans between the ages of 15 and 44.²⁷

Next is a line that relates “Living off the fat of the land.” Once more Smith may be remarking that it is better to grow our own food and depend on natural resources than to be compromised by commercialism and ploys of consumerism. The next to the last line of text, “Head twister look who’s buying?” Which could be read as a comment on who’s buying the falsehoods of advertising or fast food. And finally the last line, “This one is for the big dipper.” It is obviously a play on the phrase “Win one for the Gipper.” Ronald Regan was known as the “Gipper,” but the originator of the phrase was the

²⁷Pamela Irene S. Vernon and Pamela Jumper-Thurman.

original “Gipper,” George Gipp. He was born in 1895, and he was an athlete at the University of Notre Dame from 1917 to 1920. This work can also be a reference to the public’s tendency to overindulge while eating. From “suggestive sales” to “super sizing,” Americans eat more than they actually need to survive, brought on by practices of consumerism.

Smith discusses her use of text and icons, “text is used like Rap poetry, humor is sometimes biting or sarcastic but always intended to make people smile or laugh and still get them to hear a message. On the other hand, the large icon is intended to be seen from across the room and draw the viewer up close, since Smith always says “what you see is not what you get.”²⁸

Drums, Sweat and Tears

Drums, Sweat and Tears, (fig 4-9) is largely comprised of an image of a man’s vest.²⁹ It is similar to the vests that many native men wear to ceremonies and powwows. It has a v-shaped collar and uncomplicated structure. It is outlined in a dark brown umber shade. Instead of being decorated by ornate beaded patterns. Seminole quilting or woven designs as most Native men would wear, it is greatly enhanced by layers, dribbles, and streams of various earth tones of layers of expressive brushwork. To add visual intricacy, Smith has included an assortment of superimposed photographs, illustrations, cartoons, and text that inform the viewer of Native history and current affairs.

²⁸ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal Communication to the author. October 2, 2007.

²⁹ *Drums, Sweat and Tears*, 1996 is mixed media and acrylic on canvas. It measures 60” x 50.”

In the center of the vest's v-neck, (which would be the interior of the back) is an older photograph of Natives sitting in a 1930's, model A or T, Ford touring car with a convertible top. In the front seat is an American Indian gentleman wearing a headdress. In the passenger side is a woman also wearing a headdress, which is culturally inaccurate. Another gentleman in a headdress is in the backseat while children are in the rumble seat. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it was a common photographic practice to shoot Native Americans in traditional garb in modern mechanisms such as cars, bicycles, and even wheelchairs. People found the juxtaposition of the past and present humorous. The photographs were featured on postcards and cartes de visite. The subjects in the photographs had no idea at that time that they were being humiliated for the profit and entertainment of Whites.

On the upper right shoulder of the vest, on its exterior, is a black and white photo of an American Indian infant in a cradleboard. This was the traditional way babies were carried and great care went into hand producing these carriers. There is a certain innocence and simplicity to the photograph. And while Cradleboards are still used today, they symbolize the importance of children in indigenous society. Children are held in the utmost esteem in Native communities. For example at a community dinner, elders are served first, children are served second and adults wait until last to serve themselves. It is a form of societal reverence. Directly below that photograph, near the right breast of the garment is a newspaper or magazine ad that reads, "Host Institute was ND Tribal College." In the center of the ad is a figure of a peyote or water bird associated with the Native religious peyote ceremonies. This text is a reminder that day's Natives are educated and tribal colleges exist throughout the United States.

Towards the center opening of the vest are the words “Drums, Sweat and Tears.” The title is a play on words from a rock and roll band named “Blood, Sweat and Tear,” and also a quote from Winston Churchill in a great calls to arms. However, by replacing blood with drums refers to a sweat lodge ceremony. During a “sweat” ceremony people enter a handmade lodge of skins or other materials and to purify their body and soul. They enter the lodge for four intervals and remain while heated rocks have water poured on them for a purification ceremony. It is similar to a sauna, but it has very deep religious and spiritual significance. There are certain rules that must always be followed. People pray, sing, and use ceremonial rattles and drums. The sweat lodge is a symbol of the womb of mother Earth and the heated stones signify her body, which supports all life. The fire implemented to warm the rocks is symbolic of the light of the world and is the foundation of all life and power. The water slowly releases the heat in the stones, which rises as steam and permeates the air to create a hot, humid atmosphere. Every Native society relies on its own traditions. The purpose of a sweat is for purification of negative emotions, healing of physical sickness, clearing of mental apprehensions and the liberation of spiritual obstructions. People chant, sing, and often cry as they feel the spiritualism of the ceremony healing their ailments. The word “tears” in Smith’s text could have other multiple meanings; the many tears shed by Native people over the years or the forced removal of thousands of American Indians known as the “Trail of Tears.”

Directly across from this text is a photograph of teepees. It appears to be a forced removal camp. American Indians were removed from their homelands and placed together in camps until the government decided to move them again. Soldiers often decimated these camps. Native groups that were foes were placed together, and rations

were very few. It was a time of forced migration, death, and deplorable living conditions.

In the lower portion of the vest on the right side is a drawing of tiger lilies. American Indians ate the bulbs of tiger lilies. They were boiled, and baked and were similar to potatoes. Also, in the Disney movie *Peter Pan*, which contains an atrocious amalgamation of stereotypes about Natives, the Indian princess's name was "Tiger Lily."

On the left side of the vest starting from the top are painterly strokes of blue and brown. Midway down the vest is a cartoon with a man remarking, "the only sovereign Indian is dead Indian," which means the only Indian with the ability to be independent of the government is a dead Indian. Tribal sovereignty refers to tribes' right to administer themselves, characterize their own membership, manage tribal property, and control tribal industry and domestic relations. It further distinguishes the existence of a government-to-government relationship among tribes and the federal government. The federal government has particular trust responsibilities to defend tribal lands and resources, protect tribal rights to self-government, and supply services essential for tribal existence and development. The battle to preserve tribal sovereignty and treaty rights has been at the vanguard of the Native American civil rights movement. The government has been less than responsive to elements of tribal sovereignty. Finally this text is also a play on a quote by General Phillip Sheridan in 1869, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."

Beneath that cartoon-like figure two stereotypical cartoon figures are having a dialogue. The first character says, "But someday there will be no more wilderness and no more deer or rabbits to hunt! Already the buffalo are nearly gone! Then the Indian who knows the paleface knowledge will be the clever Indian." To which the other Native character replies, "Paleface learns paleface things! Indians learn Indian things!" Smith is

conveying stereotypes that existed in many forms. In addition she is debunking the elements of assimilation that have been a constant struggle for American Indians. Alongside the cartoon is an older photographic portrait of a Native American in chief's regalia. It too perpetuates the stereotypes that mainstream American society maintains about Natives. This is making a statement that Natives continue to practice traditional ceremonies while living modern lives.

In each corner of the composition are four figures. In the upper right corner is a pictographic image of a being. It reminds us again that Natives have a vast and often unknown past. Pictographs have appeared in Smith's art since its earliest incarnation. In the lower left corner is another pictographic image that appears to be holding a feathered spear. Perhaps he is about to count coup on the viewer. (See glossary) allowing the viewer to realize that there is so much more to Natives than anyone realizes.

The bottom right edge of the vest on the same side reads "The Vanishing American (doesn't the Congress wish)" a commentary on the fact that Natives will never vanish and the government would rather that they did instead of having to deal with them. It also refers to the common belief that Natives are disappearing today, which is also a falsehood.

In the upper left is a symbol that Smith uses as a type of signature. It is a coyote posed in a side view with the number 7137 that is Smith's tribal enrollment number. In 1990 there was a law passed, public law 101-644, (See glossary) that states that artists who claim to be Native American must prove that they are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. This excludes many tribes who are not federally recognized and a lot of Natives never registered out of fear that it is a means of the government keeping records

on them for unscrupulous reasons. This law is problematic in many ways, and Smith is not in favor of the law. Perhaps this is her way of speaking against the law. It is also interesting to note that Smith uses a coyote as her symbol. In Native society, Coyote is seen as a teacher of sorts. Again she uses the guise of a coyote to give us a message.

Throughout this work of multiple images, and layered washes trickling down from the top of the work that compose flowing movements of fluid color that is soothing in its color and arrangement. The meaning is powerfully persuasive and sly in its presentation. Smith uses various images and text fragments to inform the viewer of the dichotomies of Native life. American Indian people have to live in two worlds. One world is modern, contemporary, and bursting with stereotypes that have not vanished after years of co-existing in a Euro-centric world. The other world is traditional and consists of their sacred beliefs and ceremonies. This is why many Natives say they have to keep a foot in each culture. Smith manages to juxtapose images and text that attest to this cultural rift and the cultural politics associated with the problems inherent to colonization.

Commercialism and Euro-Centric Influences

Duo (Tonto and the Lone Ranger) 2002

Duo (Tonto and the Lone Ranger) (fig. 4-10) is a work in which Smith scrutinizes the contradiction between American practices of commerce and the belief systems and existence of American Indian culture.³⁰ She merges elements of comedy, folklore, and stereotypes to edify the general public about the absurdities of the historical interactions between Natives and Whites in reality, film, and literature. In the same composition she

³⁰ *Duo (Tonto and the Lone Ranger) 2002, is acrylic on canvas 84 x 50".*

retrieves and juxtaposes popular images from American culture that compare issues of American commercialism and elements of pop art that enhance her mode of expression by exemplifying the paradoxes of Native and Euro-American culture. *Duo* is Smith's nod to Warhol's use of commercialism and Lichtenstein's use of comic book images. In spite of this, Smith uses these well-known techniques to examine the effect of media and stereotypes in society. But her investigation of racism and prevailing attitudes that ethnic peoples occupy secondary ranks sets her at a distance from her predecessors. Her use of commercialism could be construed as similar, but her cultural inferences give her work an originality that relies on Native American humor-which is sly and sometimes self-deprecating. There is also an inescapable Spanish or Hispanic influence as well.

Duo features a washed out background of a classic comic book style image of the Lone Ranger and Tonto with easily recognizable symbols of American multihued commercial promotions overlaid on the backdrop images. Perhaps Smith's theme of dismantling the Lone Ranger's reputation relied more on Warholian themes and theory than noticed at first glance. In 1984, Warhol did a Rorschach type painting of the Lone Ranger with a disfiguring skin disease on his face, defacing the popular figure. Rossalin Krauss reads the Rorschach series as a "parodic vision of Color Field abstraction," as a sassy corruption of the "stain painting" practiced by Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitski. If the Color Field painters wanted to transcend the carnal messiness of Abstract Expressionism, to move painting into the disembodied realm of pure opticality...³¹

³¹ Mia Fineman. *Art Net*. "Andy Warhol Rorschach Paintings.

<http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/features/fineman/fineman10-15-96.asp>

Smith recognizes that the United States is obsessed with classifying people according to race and ethnicity. All people must fit in one group or another, and once they think of themselves as members of one box, they find it easy to stereotype the members of the other boxes. Smith also realizes that media stereotypes are inevitable, especially in the advertising world, which needs as wide an audience as possible to quickly understand information. Advertising stereotypes act like codes that give audiences a quick, common understanding of a product or group of products—usually relating to class, affluence, social roles or occupation. Smith cleverly combines stereotyping and commerce to create a statement about two sets of American belief systems and values.

The images of the Lone Ranger and Tonto go back to the 1930s. The main character “The Lone Ranger” was a masked former Texas Ranger who rights wrongs in the western American frontier riding his trusty steed Silver, typically with the support of a clever and quiet Native American known as Tonto, whose horse was named Scout. The Lone Ranger would famously say, “Hi-ho Silver, away!” to get the horse to dash away. It became the prototype for White Western heroes who had subordinate American Indian partners. Smith informs the viewer that commercialism is just another, comparable form of information that is subconsciously absorbed and reinforced in peoples’ minds through media and literature and advertising.

Placed over the faded images, zooming into the picture plane from the lower left corner is a light blue, block lettered logo reading “Ziploc” that recalls the popular storage bags. In 2004, Zen Pearlstone, in her article “Kemo sabe: The Tonto Paintings of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith,” states, “the wordplay in the paintings title and the inclusion of the

brand name 'Ziploc' might indicate that the two men are united³² One could counter that perhaps viewers not only see them as united, they think the two figures of popular culture should remain together as if in a time capsule. They have been inseparable, as Pearlstone implies. But popular culture wants the characters to be held captive as a historic reserve of goods and information, intended as a method of capturing childhood memories that mainstream culture doesn't want to change, regardless of politically correct information that reveals their idols' relationship to have been less than perfect. Ziploc bags are known for keeping items fresh, unmarked, unsullied and untouched by time. Or conceivably Tonto would like to place The Lone Ranger in a Ziploc bag to save himself from his existence as the being the lesser cohort of years of submissiveness.

Across the neck of Tonto, written inside a green oval outlined in black, is the phrase "trade ins are welcome." While Pearlstone believes this to be a remark that should be read as Tonto being expendable, because any Native could take his place, perhaps that meaning could be reversed. Pearlstone says, "He [Tonto] symbolizes all of the Indian tribes who have been infantilized by the United States government, while The Lone Ranger is a stand in for that patriarchal entity."³³

Pearlstone states that "Tonto" is a term meaning foolish. Other sources claim it can mean "stupid." However, much has been made about "Kemo sabe," the designation Tonto uses for the Lone Ranger. Pearlstone says it means "honored scout." When considering this dilemma, researchers, scholars, or academics should appreciate that

³² Zena Pearlstone, "Kemo Sabe: The Tonto Paintings of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith." *American Indian Art* vol.29, no. 3 (summer 2004), 73.

³³ Pearlstone, 72

when America was “discovered” there were already over two hundred equally incomprehensible Southwestern American dialects. One humorous interpretation states that if “Tonto” was derived from Spanish, perhaps so was Kemo sabe, which could be interpreted as “qui no sabe,” meaning “he who knows nothing.” As a Native person Tonto would have possessed a keen sense of humor. After all it was Tonto who originally saved The Lone Ranger. And yet he was constantly treated as unwise. Natives are known for their sharp and understated humor. And consider this, why would Tonto call his partner “Honored Scout” and his horse “Scout”? Perhaps Smith is implying that Native knowledge has always been far and above that of the new invaders who often thought of their Native colleagues as inferior and humorless.

At the top of the composition is an ad that reads “Goya Hot Sauce Salsa Picante.” “Goya” is a brand name of hot salsa as well as a Spanish painter. In 1799 in reaction to the French Revolution he created a series of etchings entitled *Caprichos*. The visions in these prints were a medium for his denunciation of the universal ignorance in the Spanish culture in which he lived. The condemnations are disparate and sharp; he articulates critiques in opposition to the prevalence of false notions, the lack of knowledge and inabilities of the controlling classes, academic inadequacies, matrimonial errors, and other issues. Many of these illustrate the artist's razor-sharp sardonic humor and denunciation of society much as Smith's works offer her own social critiques.

The hot sauce and salsa picante captions can be read as items that are basically the same. However, hot sauce is thick yet blended and conceivably more cultured than salsa. Picante is not blended, it contains vegetables is more natural and unaffected by exterior forces of integration. Could these be labels for The Lone Ranger and Tonto? Or might the

label reflect Smith's scorching commentary? Also, during the time that the Lone Ranger was to have been a Texas Ranger, Texas included territories that were known to be part of Mexico. Perhaps The Lone Ranger was as unrelated to the actual United States as Tonto who was said to be Apache.

In the mid right register is the insignia for "MasterCard." Pearlstone believes that this is a means by which the Lone Ranger could replace Tonto. Right now MasterCard is famous for their "priceless" campaign, started in 1997.³⁴ Perhaps Tonto could be thinking, "A partner who treats me insignificantly, and a means of sealing him in a timeless void, the money to escape--priceless." Or more likely Tonto could see the credit card in the opposite of Pearlstone's theories, that he could easily replace The Lone Ranger.

Interestingly, most of the images in the composition refer to plastic in one form or the other. Lone Ranger films were made of celluloid at the earliest times, Ziplocs are produced in plastic, hot sauce is bottled more likely than not in plastic, Credit cards are plastic. Could Smith be implying that the entire affair-the racism, the consumerism are all products of a plastic world? It could be considered plastic not as in plastic art but plastic as a material readily capable of change. Also the credit card is plastic or fake, much like the Lone Ranger and Tonto's relationship could be read.

During more recent times, another aspect of the Lone Ranger and Tonto's relationship has appeared in literature and film. As far back as comic Lenny Bruce, there have been allegations and tall stories of a homosexual relationship between the two.

³⁴ MasterCard Canada Press Section.

http://www.mastercard.com/canada/general/press/pr/05/pr_2005_12_12_nhl.html

Many agree that there is an element of question surrounding the sexuality of the Lone Ranger. In fact there was a video made with Bruce's voice called "Thank you Masked Man" based on the subject. Upon close examination of the Lone Ranger, he is an unattached conqueror who travels through the Western frontier with his American Indian sidekick. Regardless of his travels and battles he manages to keep his light blue cowboy outfit spotless- so finicky! Such a drama queen! It is little wonder that the fictional figure was easily turned into countless figures of flamboyant, singing cowboys. Filmmaker Mel Brooks' *Blazing Saddles* obviously makes fun of the queer philosophy characterized by the Lone Ranger. Pearlstone acknowledges "The Lone Ranger could never fall in love with a woman because Tonto would have always been between them."³⁵ As a field, the "buddy narrative" is frequently interpreted as homoerotic, from Leslie Fiedler's "Come back to the Raft ag'in Huck Honey" to more present-day gender speculation.³⁶

Venison Stew

In Venison Stew (fig. 4-11) Smith alludes to Andy Warhol's celebrated pop-art facsimiles of Campbell's Soup cans with Smith's Native, enhanced observation of survival and commercialism.³⁷ *Venison Stew* is a mainstay of sust 1

Coyote - Coyote is a legendary figure of folklore widespread to Native American cultures. This figure is characteristically male and is usually anthropomorphic. Sometimes he has had some animal characteristics such as a furry coat, sharp ears, golden green eyes, claws and a long tail. Coyote is generally irreverent in his actions and morals.

³⁵ Pearlstone, 76.

³⁶ Leslie Fiedler. "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in Huck Honey."

Reprinted in *The Partisan Review* (June 1948). *The End of Innocence*.

(Beacon Press: Boston, 1955), 142.

³⁷ *Venison Stew*, 1995 is a Collagraph, measuring 36 3/16 x 28 and 7/18 " that measures 36 3/16 x

He teaches people about their weaknesses and shortcomings through his many adventures. He can be witty and cunning, but he can also be his own worst enemy. The stories and tales that comprise Coyote's adventures differ from nation to nation. Smith often employs Coyote, visually and figuratively, to show us our vulnerability to foolishness and vice. He can be a metaphor for the act of deceit for your own gain.

Kokopelli- Kokopelli is a notable fertility deity, most often illustrated as a flute player with a large humpback and usually depicted with a large penis and appendages on his head that look like antennae.¹ He has been recognized by many American Indian cultures in the Southwest United States. As with many fertility deities, Kokopelli- supervises both childbirth and crops. He is a trickster god. Due to his ability to manipulate human sexuality, Kokopelli is often shown with an unbelievably large phallus. The Ho-Chunk, tribe thinks his penis is detachable, and he now and then hides it in a river or body of water to have sex with women who gather or cleanse there.

Rabbit - When the earth was new, the Ojibwa people knew they had a lot to learn. Kitchen Manitou received compassion and provided them with an educator named Nanabush. Nanabush was the son of a god and human woman. He was sent to the earthly world as an envoy to educate the Ojibwa people about the power of plants, and he taught them benevolence, bigheartedness, and integrity. First he gave names to foliage, waters, mountains, trees, and creatures. Nanabush was also a trickster, who loved to make human beings look silly. His tricks frequently failed. As a Trickster, he had many abilities, and one was to alter his shape and turn into a rabbit. Nanabush forms were rendered on stones and impressed in cliffs and caves where his rabbit-like shape can still be seen. There are Native American petroglyphs of Rabbit figures in Canada and the United States. Smith is known for depicting rabbits to imply the longevity and closeness of Native people. *Celebrate 40,000 Years of Art* is a work by Smith that illustrates the endurance of Native peoples.

Raven- Raven is a figure in Northwest or West Coast Native traditions. Amongst his

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Different cultures and researchers disagree about whether the Kokopelli is the flute player and fertility god or that the flute player is actually a different deity known as "Lahanhoya."

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numerous exploits, he took the sun and moon from the sky deity and placed them into the sky. Some legends say he brought the initial humans to the earth. Some say he found the original human children in a clamshell. One of raven's worst adversaries was his fellow trickster coyote. Many also claim he provided the great creator's humans with their fundamental food- salmon and fresh fruit.

CEREMONIAL AND RELIGIOUS TERMS

Drums- To American Indians the musical instrument with the greatest extent of power is the drum. A ceremonial event today such as a memorial, Powwow, 49 party (a party held after a Powwows), graduation, give away, wedding, blessing, or any honorable event, still has the music of the drum. Different nations or tribes possess different rituals regarding the drum and how to use it. The basic structure is similar in most nations. Each uses a wooden structure or a carefully constructed log, topped by a tanned deerskin or elk skin, carefully cured usually by animal brains. The skin is stretched tightly across the opening by animal thread or leather straps. Usually the drums are two and one half to three feet in width, played by a group of men who stand around the drum in a circle. Some nations use a single drum, called a hand drum.

Native Drum Groups- The “heartbeat” of Native American ceremony or ritual is the drum. At Powwows and sometimes other events there are many groups of drummers and drums that take turns playing. Each group has a name that represents their Nation, style, the group’s idea of their individual identification. A group consists of four or five players sometimes more. More often than not they are related or close as friends. They are usually led by a singer who is closely followed in harmony by a second singer. The drums are usually placed around the outer edges of the powwow arena area. Drummers must all know the songs for each type of dance-honor songs, gourd songs, etc. Sometimes others including women gather around the drum. Songs are often recorded for record and for younger members of the family to learn once their time comes to take their place at the drum. If a drum group is particularly good, they are invited to play at many powwows, and sometimes they obtain recording contracts. During Powwows and other events certain drums are asked to play certain songs. If someone requests a certain drum, they must pay for the privilege. At most Powwows the best drum groups are awarded cash prizes. *Drum, Sweat and Tears*, a painting by Smith, presents the many levels and the depth of the Drum’s significance through a rich, layered palimpsest of text and images.

Powwows- A conference, meeting, or council group of Native Americans. They can be a festivity or a series of dances and or ceremonies.

Sweat lodge - During a “sweat” ceremony people enter a handmade lodge of skins or other materials to purify their body and soul. They enter the lodge for four intervals and remain while heated rocks have water poured on them for a purification ceremony. Unlike a European sauna, it has a very deep religious and spiritual significance. Certain rules must always be followed. People pray, sing, and use ceremonial rattles and drums. The sweat lodge is a symbol of the womb of mother Earth, and the heated stones signify

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her body, which supports all life. The fire lit to heat the rocks symbolizes the light of the world, and is the foundation of all life and power. The water slowly releases the heat in the stones, which rises as steam and permeates the air to create a hot, humid atmosphere. The purpose of a sweat is to purify negative emotions, healing of physical sickness, purifying of mental apprehensions and liberate spiritual obstructions. People chant, sing, and often cry as they feel the spiritualism of the ceremony healing their ailments.

Peyote Religion and The Native American Church- Native American Peyote used mostly by the Native American Church religion is an organized, reasonably recognized

phenomenon that goes back be to around 1880 in western Oklahoma. At this point in time the newly imprisoned Kiowa and Comanche Indians lived under burdensome limitations in poverty-stricken conditions that saw a deficiency in living conditions and an increase in intense starvation. In such intolerable living conditions religious movements began to rise to provide hope to a hopeless race. Today the Native American Church contribution is widespread among Native Americans. About one-fourth of the Indian population participates in this religion. Today it stands as one of the most purposeful, spiritually and physically powerful influences in Native America

Ghost Dance- The Ghost Dance that came about around 1890, organized by a religious leader known as Wavoka.² It gained an unusual prominence promising that the American Indians' world would revive, seeing the food supplies would return and the white race would disappear. Obviously it was threatening to the white race. It was brought to a bloody and vicious end at the Battle of Wounded Knee, one of the worst massacres in United States history. Certain clothing was made to be worn during battle and during the ghost dance. Those items of clothing were thought to provide protection against evil and other warriors. Smith's *Flathead War shirt* exemplifies these ideals. It is meant to protect present day Natives from the weaknesses and failures that White culture employs to remove the strength of "Native warriors."

Potlatch- The potlatch is a practice that demonstrates the shape of governmental authority, wealth, social standing, and, the enduring existence of ritual sacred practices. A potlatch usually involves ceremonial time. This includes commemoration of childbirth, celebration of passages, puberty marriages, memorial services, or honoring of the departed. It is a political and societal exchange. The potlatch is a very important part of the Northwest Coast Native peoples' societies. Protocol varies with the individual nations. Sometimes the potlatch involves music and dancing, theatre, deeds, and sacred rituals. The consecrated rituals are mostly in the winter. During this time, hierarchical relationships in and among clans, communities, and various nations, are practiced and strengthened by distributing prosperity, dance presentations, and various rituals. Family status is elevated by those who haven't the most possessions but give away their possessions in a ceremonial rite of passing wealth. The host family display their wealth and prominence by giving away the goods they gather over time for the celebration.

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See section **CREATORS OR SPRITUAL BEINGS**

4

REGALIA

REGALIA-Regalia is the ceremonial clothing worn by Natives at Powwows and various ceremonies. Many people refer to the clothing as “costumes.” The correct term is “regalia.” Smith does paintings and prints of Native clothing, both men’s, and women’s, to remind viewers of many things-- the channeling of energy, protection, and a pride and spirit that can never be deterred.

WAR SHIRTS-In the nineteenth century war shirts had numerous functions other than existing as simple items of clothing. In many Native communities from all over the United States and Canada, War shirts were hand made to pay tribute to warriors and a select few men with special attributes of leadership and spiritual power. They were constructed for those with combatant strengths, powers of mysticism and as a way to bring forth powers attributed to animals. The designs on the shirts illustrated special powers, symbols of remarkable actions, and noteworthy battles. Smith’s work *I See Red: Chief Sleepy Eye War Shirt* is a modern version made to protect Native peoples from the new tribulations brought on by modern society and its ills. It also speaks to the rage felt by Native people trying to live in two worlds or cultures.

Ghost Dance Dresses- Women’s ceremonial clothing was as significant as the men’s and the group itself. Ghost Dance dresses and shirts, decorated with powerful symbols, reflected the sacred facets of the ritual. Smith often paints heavily outlined figures of dresses. Works *Like a Tree* epitomizes the strength of Indigenous women and the many dilemmas they face today.

Feathers- A Golden or Bald Eagle feather it is one of the most gratifying items one can ever be presented. The Indians accept as true that eagles have correlation with the heavens because the sky is their home. Native Americans believe that if they are presented with an eagle feather, it is a symbol from above. They believe that the eagle is the leader of all birds, because it soars high above as it does and has better vision than all the birds. Once presented with an eagle feather, one is required take care of it. It is considered disrespectful to treat it without love and great care. An eagle feather is a lot like the American flag; it should be treated with care and should not be dropped on the ground. At a Powwow, if a dancer’s feather should drop to the arena floor, all dancing must stop until the proper ritual is conducted, and the feather is removed from the dance area.

Parfleche Bags-Rawhide bags that resemble file folders or envelopes. Made by the women of certain tribes, they were painted in abstract designs with natural pigments. They were used to carry dried meat and other items.

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ART TERMS

American Indian Art Markets-Art shows are large markets open to and featuring Native American art and artists. These shows are consumer, oriented manner and

emphasize Native American Art. Some shows are juried or the artists are invited, which enforces quality standards.

Petroglyphs- These are images engraved into a rock's face. Petroglyphs are one of the most enduring examples of American Indian art. Native Americans do not consider petroglyphs to be art but rather documentation of sacred events.

Pictographs- These are rudimentary symbols or drawings of figures and symbols used in early Native American art and documentation. They are colored with red, white, yellow, or black dyes made from various minerals or vegetation. Sometimes fingers are painting instrument made some of the figures. Other times brushes were constructed with animal hair or vegetation fibers.

Ledger art- As warfare and constant relocation became a norm of Native nomadic life, the only property that could be safely kept were items that could be easily retrieved and carried away. Ledger books were suited to safeguarding historical information and other vital facts. Ledger books, pencils and inks were often obtained by trade or by raids and the bounty of warfare. After Native people came into contact with European and American artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin, Native art became more naturalistic in its orientation. Smith often incorporates traditional Flathead ledger art into her works, especially her prints.

The Kiowa School- Sometime around 1918 a group of young Kiowas, then located in Oklahoma, became fervently involved in producing art-- mostly drawings and sketches. These were no commonplace young men. They were sons and grandsons of chiefs and medicine men. Sometimes they were fortunate to obtain good paper and watercolors. But usually they used notebook paper "borrowed" from school.

Indian style or flat-style painting –This type of painting is done in a two-dimensional style with gouache paints. The subject matter was usually traditional. Gouache painting is a European tradition involving a type of watercolor medium used by the artists involved with the Santa Fe and Kiowa School.

Santa Fe School -Dorothy Dunn was a pioneering art instructor with a great deal of influence over the development of Native American art in the 20th century. Schooled in Chicago, Dunn came to New Mexico in the mid-1920s to develop **The Art Studio** at the Santa Fe Indian School. Among her students were Allan Houser, Ben Quintana, Harrison Begay, Joe H. Herrera, Quincy Tahoma, Andy Tsihnajinnie, Pablita Velarde, Eva Mirabel, Tonita Lujan, Pop Chalee, Oscar Howe, and Geronima Cruz Montoya

San Ildefonso Painting-By the early 1930s this new style, which eventually came to be considered a traditional form of Native American painting, was adopted by artists in the

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San Ildefonso pueblo neighboring pueblos in the Rio Grande valley. The movement, typified by bold color, balanced compositions, and figures painted without shading, perspective, or foreground and background has continued to influence succeeding

generations of Native painters. The first subjects of these paintings included ceremonial dances, activities of daily life, and adaptations of traditional pottery designs and decorative motifs.

DISTINCTIVE MEDIA

Quill Work- Porcupine quilling is a very old Native American art used particularly among East Coast and Plains tribes. Indian quillwork involved softening and dying stiff porcupine quills by boiling and chewing, and then interlacing, or sewed them upon leather or birch bark. The most astonishing examples of porcupine quill worked were the Plains Indian war shirts. Each one would take a skilled artist more than a year to complete. Such items as Medicine bags, moccasins, and jewelry, birch bark boxes, and baskets were other objects frequently quilled.

Beading- Traditionally, Native American beads were made from shells, coral, turquoise and other stones, copper and silver, wood, amber, ivory, and animal skeletons, horns, and sometimes animal teeth. Glass beads came into use when colonists brought them from Europe for trade. In modern times glass beads, predominantly fine seed beads, are the most important materials for traditional beaders of many tribes. There are many different styles of American Indian beading.

RACIAL TERMS OR PHRASES

FBI-This could stand for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but more recently Native humor has used it as an acronym for “full blooded Indian.”

Flathead- The Flathead peoples are a confederation of three nations--the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d’Oreille, and the Kootenai. “Confederated Salish” refers to both the Salish and Pend d’Oreille tribes. The term “Flatheads” does not refer to the shape of the heads. Because they used means to compress their own heads into points, they called those not of their belief system Flatheads.”³

Apple - To the American Indian an “apple” is a person who is red on the outside and white on the inside. It is someone who complies with white society and denies his or her own culture. Smith’s work *Modern Times* also speaks to living in two cultures and specifically to Natives living as “apples.”

Wannabe-This is a person who wants to be Indian. In more open terms it can be defined as a person who mimics or impersonates another. It can be pronounced - "Won-ah-bee".

³

The Flathead Tribe

<http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/transmiss/congress/flathead.html>

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From the words "Want to be" or "Wanna Be." Many wannabes are of mixed blood. They

could be a mixture of White, Hispanic, African American or any variety of races.

ANIMALS

Buffalo -The American buffalo or bison inhabited the Great Plains of the United States and Canada in massive herds, ranging from the Great Slave Lake in Canada's far north to Mexico in the south, and from eastern Oregon almost to the Atlantic Ocean until it was decimated by the settlers. *Genesis* by Smith signifies the importance of the buffalo and the declining environment that threatens its existence.

Deer- Deer served as prey, sacrifices, and also mentioned as "first helper" in some materialization tales. The deer is noted for family defense and velocity. "Deer Woman" is a figure of native folklore that can transform herself from a doe into a beautiful woman. As a woman she appears at powwows, bars, and other gathering places to ensnare men with her beauty and eventually to kill them.

Water Bird- Water birds symbolize renewal of life, rainy seasons, bodies of water, remote travel, distant vision, and knowledge.

Owl- A keen hunter, the owl is connected with darkness and night as well as having keen eyes and clever hunter. Among most Native Nations, the owl is considered a bad omen, or a warning of death.

Eagle-The eagle is one of the most revered birds. It is sacred a carrier of prayers. Many Indian societies respect this bird as having valor, wisdom, and a unique relationship to the creator. The eagle is associated with spirits and visions.

Snake- Associated with numerous healing and fertility rituals, the snake is connected with lightning, the male organ, speed, and stealth. He is usually illustrated with his tongue extended. He is also well thought of as a hunter, and appears in some materialization stories.

CREATORS OR SPRITUAL BEINGS

The Great Creator- The **Great Spirit** is a conception of a supreme being prevalent among Native American and First Nations cultures. Also called *Wakan Tanka* in Lakota, *The Creator*, or *The Great Maker* in English and *Gitchi Manitou* in Algonquian, the *Great Spirit* was a syncretist conception of God. The Great Creator is personal, close to the people. He ruled the "heavenly hunting ground," a place similar to Heaven. Chief Dan Evehema, a spiritual leader of the Hopi Nation, described the Great Spirit as follows: "The Great Spirit is all-powerful. He taught us how to live, to worship, where to go and what food to carry, gave us seeds to plant and harvest. He gave us a set of sacred stone tablets into which he breathed all teachings in order to safeguard his land and life. In these stone tablets were inscribed instructions, prophecies and warnings."

Amotken – Amotken is the creator god of the Salish and other American Indians; he resides in heaven, isolated and alone. He is an old man, intelligent and caring, with an

infinite consideration for his creation. Coyote serves as his envoy. IN the painting *Genesis*, Smith states, “IN THE BEGINNING AMOTKEN CREATED COYOTE AND ASSIGNED TO HIM THE WELFARE.” This could be read that coyote was put here to keep us from straying from our destiny and watch over us in his own way.

FOOD

Fry bread -Fry bread is an American Indian food found throughout the US. Fry bread is unleavened dough, deep-fried in oil, or lard. The dough is generally leavened by yeast or baking powder. Fry bread was created in the 1800s, when the American Indian was forced onto reservations. Smith’s painting *Fry Bread* exposes the food for all that it is both enjoyable and detrimental in it.

Commodities- Commodities are foods and other goods given by the government to those in need, usually consisting of necessities and unhealthy foods. Each month’s foods and items vary due to donations.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORICAL FIGURES

Chief Seattle- (1786 -1866) Ts’ial-la-kum, Chief Sealth, also known as Chief Seattle, was a leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish American Indian tribe. He was very respected. Many believed he was a chief but he was not. His father was a chief but they did not practice descendancy in ruling families. He gave a now controversial speech that has been attributed to a local poet and a screenwriter from the 1970s. The poet who translated the speech did not know Sealth’s language and he waited thirty years to publish it. The original translation of the speech was quite questionable in nature and is now lost. However Many posters, t-shirts, calendars have been made with the wisdom allegedly attributed to him. One version mentions bison and railroads things that Chief Seattle would have never seen or even heard of during his lifetime. Smith is a reverent follower of Chief Seattle and did a series of works in his honor and the honor of his beliefs. On the official Susquamish tribal website maintains that Seattle made the speech. Perhaps it is not verbatim, but it is his speech according to his surviving peoples.

Crazy Horse- Tashunca-utico (1849-1877). Revered for his ferociousness in combat, Crazy Horse was known among his people as a prophet and a great leader devoted to defending the culture and standards of the Lakota people.

Sitting Bull- Tatanka Iyotaka (1831-1890) was a Sioux chief. He was considered the principal chief of the Dakota Sioux, who were removed from their reservation in the Black Hills by miners in 1876. He fought against the whites and other Native Americans, rejecting offers to be moved to Indian Territory. He helped defeat Gen. George A. Custer and his army in June, 1876. A prison guard later murdered him.

Wovoka- Wovoka was of Paiute ancestry. Wovoka claimed to have had a prophetic vision during the solar eclipse on January 1, 1889. Wovoka's vision entailed the

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resurrection of the Paiute dead and the removal of whites and their works from North America. Wovoka taught that in order to bring this vision to pass the Native Americans must live righteously and perform a traditional round dance, known as the Ghost Dance,

in a series of five-day gatherings. Wovoka's teachings spread quickly among many Native American peoples, notably the Lakota. It is important to note is that Wovoka's preaching included messages of non-violence.

CAUCASIAN HISTORICAL FIGURES

Karl Bodmer- (February 6, 1809–October 30, 1893) was a Swiss painter of the American West. He accompanied German explorer Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied from 1832 through 1834 on his Missouri River expedition. Maximilian hired him as an artist with the specific intent of traveling through the American West and recording images of the different tribes they saw along the way.

George Catlin- (1796-1872) After a short career as a lawyer, Catlin produced two major collections of paintings of American Indians and a series of books chronicling his journeys among the Native peoples of North, Central and South America. Claiming his curiosity in America's "vanishing race" was started by a visiting American Indian delegation in Philadelphia, he decided to record the appearance and customs of America's Native people.

George A. Custer- (1839-1876) Originating in Fort Riley, Kansas, Custer marched with approximately 700 soldiers, moving south for several days, identifying Indian camp signs all along the way. On 24 June, the Arikara and Osage scouts identified a party of Sioux following them. The Sioux fled when approached, but Custer did not want any of the Sioux encampments to escape. When his regiment reached the Sioux encampment on 25 June 1876, Custer made a decision to attack and fight the Indians. One of the most chronicled events in the history of the American West resulted, the famous Battle of the Little Big Horn, otherwise known as Custer's Last Stand. Smith's work *Rain* depicts a prone Custer being tied down by Lilliputian sized Native figures.

Edward Curtis -(1840-1887) Curtis was often portrayed as a exceptional photographer but also criticized for manipulating his images. Curtis's photographs have been found to misrepresent American Indians by depicting them with the accepted notions and stereotypes of the time period. Although the early twentieth century was difficult time for most Native communities in America, American Indians were far from being a "vanishing race," although this was what Curtis' images set out to document. When Natives' rights were being curtailed and the federal government ignored its treaties, many Natives were successfully becoming accustomed to Western society. By reinforcing the Native identity as the "noble savage" and a catastrophic vanishing race, Curtis took attention away from the true dilemma of American Natives at the time when he was witnessing their squalid conditions on reservations first-hand and their effort to find their position in Western culture and acclimatize to their changing world. In many of his images Curtis removed parasols, suspenders, wagons, and other traces of Western and material culture from his pictures. He also paid Natives to pose in staged scenes, wear historically inaccurate dress and costumes, dance and partake in simulated ceremonies.

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He distorted and maneuvered his pictures to create a misleading ethnographic reproduction of Native tribes as if untouched by Western society.

WAR GAMES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Counting coup- Counting coup was a battle practice of Native Americans of the Great Plains. A nonviolent demonstration of bravery, it consisted of touching an enemy warrior, with the hand or with a *coup stick*, then running away unharmed. Risk of injury or death was involved, should the other warrior respond violently. The phrase "counting coup" can also refer to the recounting of stories about battle exploits. "Coups Marks" was the name chosen for one of the artist cooperatives that Smith helped originate.

49- An official party after powwows usually at an undesignated location. Starting in the late 1940s and 1950s high- school and college-aged Native teenagers and young adults would gather together for their own drum festivities after the traditional ceremonies were held. These drum celebrations are usually held late at night and the songs are less than traditional. Sometimes lyrics include songs about "Indian Girls," and or "let me drive you home in my one-eyed Indian car."⁴ Some say the "49" stands for 49 Native American veterans who served the United States armed services in WWI and returned home without being American citizens.⁵

Stomp dance- The **Stomp Dance** is executed by the various Southeastern tribes and Native American communities, including the Cherokee, Creeks, and Seminoles. Active Stomp Dance communities still exist in North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alabama and Florida. The Word "stomp" is a description of the dance. There is no correlation to Native American language. Smith recalls that when she became angry her father would remind her "not to do the stomp dance." This portion of the elder Smith's humor is memorialized in the work *Modern Times*.

Stick ball- Stickball has been a part of Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Creeks entertainment. Each team tries to advance the ball down the field to the other team's goalpost using only their sticks, never touching or throwing the ball with their hands. Points are scored when a player hits the opposing team's goalpost with the ball.

Hand games- Hand games, like the gift exchange are a significant way to reallocate goods among community members.. In the oral traditions of Native peoples, gamblers, like tricksters, are inclined to be upper limit figures that can move between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Hand games are a manner of gambling because you can lose.

⁴

Mr. Benny Smith personal communication with the author. Mr. Smith was a counselor at Haskell Indian Nations University for over twenty-five years. He is the son of the famed Redbird Smith. Today he trains horses and is asked to officiate at most of Haskell's sacred ceremonies.

⁵

This story could be folklore. There are many stories how the actual name "49" came about. 11

VARIOUS HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS TERMS

Pan-Indianism-The process by which Natives that met mostly at boarding schools started to marry and produce children of different nations such as Arapaho-Sioux, or Sioux –Caddo. It is the Native American version of the “melting pot.”

Quincentennary- This is also known as the anniversary of Columbus’s so-called discovery of North America. Many Native Americans do not feel that Columbus Day or any of his activities should be celebrated. Many of the historical accounts recognizing his contributions have not fully reported accurate versions of his travels or his accomplishments. Native American activists, artists, and educators are trying to rectify this misinformation through education and protests.

Reservation-An Indian reservation is territory that is assigned to a tribe under the American Indian tribes. Reservations are directly managed by United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Reservations were formed when settlers took Native land by violence and powerful war techniques from the American Indians. The land is now federal territory, and Native Americans have restricted national sovereignty laws on these areas, which differ from the non-Native Laws. For example they can authorize legal casinos on reservations, which attract recreational visitors who bring in money for these impoverished areas. There are nearly 300 reservations in the United States, not all of the country's over 550 recognized tribes have a reservation —certain nations have more than one reservation, others don't have any. Some tribes, because they won't follow governmental regulations are not federally recognized and get none of the privileges afforded other nations

Rez-Native American slang abbreviation of the word “reservation.”

Indian Gaming- As an independent federal regulatory agency of the United States, the National Indian Gaming Commission was established to carry out the requirements of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (Act). The Commission includes a Chairman and two Commissioners, each of whom serves on a full-time basis for a three-year term. The Chairman is appointed by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate.

Smallpox and AIDS-Very contagious diseases spread among humans. Smallpox is said to be responsible for the deaths of millions of Native Americans. the American Indian population in North America has been estimated at approximately twelve million, but by the early nineteen hundreds, the population had been reduced to roughly four hundred and seventy-four thousand. It is impossible to arrive at a number for the millions of American Indians killed during this period by European diseases, with smallpox the deadliest by far.⁶ Today AIDS affects more than one million Native Americans across the

⁶
Ned O. Eddins. “The Plains Indians Small Pox.”
http://www.thefurtrapper.com/indian_smallpox.htm

⁷
Judy Nichols, “Aids Takes a Growing Toll on Native Americans. The *Arizona Republic* United States. The areas of highest concentration include California, Oklahoma, Arizona, Washington, and Alaska. Many fear that the numbers are rapidly increasing and it could

be become the next deadliest epidemic among the Native population.⁷ Smith refers to the small pox epidemics in her *Paper Dolls for a Post-Columbian World*.

Missionaries- Missionaries were groups of religious people that sought to venture into Indian country spreading religion, education and white behavior and customs to the Native “savages.” Ironically the most missions were built with Indian labor. The Jesuit missionary that came to the Flathead tribe was Father Desmet. Father Desmet’s work began in 1840 when he set out for the Flathead country in the Far Northwest.

DEFINING AMERICAN INDIAN STATUS

CDIB-“Certificate Degree of American Indian Blood” is an official government document that officially states that a person is genetically a definite degree of Native American blood of a federally recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community. Certificates are carefully and procedurally given out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but only after an applicant can prove a completed genealogy with supporting legal documents such as birth certificates, through one or both birth parents, from an enrolled Indian or an Indian listed in a base roll such as the Dawes Rolls. The genealogies proven on previously issued CDIB’s or on the governmental rolls on the filer’s ancestry are used to establish the filer’s blood degree (unless if those in charge challenge them as erroneous). These days nations necessitate a definite bare minimum degree of tribal heritage for membership. Some federal benefits like per diem payments, casino payouts, and per capita money require a minimum of Indian blood degree. United States public law 101-644 states that in order to exhibit or sell work labeled, as “Native American” one must be in possession of an official certificate degree of American Indian blood. This can be a great disadvantage for those who belong to a nation that is not federally recognized.

Tribal Membership-Some tribes require a tribal membership along with a CDIB for verification of federal benefits. This usually involves someone who has a blood quantum that keeps them from federal care but includes them in funding in schooling and health care.

Tribal Enrollment number- This is an enrollment number given to members of a Native American descent by their tribal headquarters. The two issues between having a CDIB and or an enrollment card have become snarled in the twentieth century as the United States government has inserted itself more and more into the internal affairs of Indian nations. Ask who is Indian, and you will get divergent responses depending on who is answering. The U.S. Census Bureau, state governments, various federal government programs and agencies, and tribal governments all have different definitions. The criteria vary from a specific amount of blood quantum and descendency to residency and self-

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/0703NativeAIDS-main.html>

⁸

Nora Livesay. “Understanding the History of Tribal Enrollment.”

<http://www.airpi.org/pubs/enroll.html>

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identification.⁸

Public law 101-644-The Act of August 27, 1935 (49 Stat. 891; 25 U.S.C. 305 et seq.; 18 U.S.C. 1158-59), created the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. The Board is responsible for promoting the development of American Indian and Alaska Native arts and crafts, improving the economic status of members of Federally recognized tribes, and helping to develop and expand marketing opportunities for arts and crafts produced by American Indians and Alaska Natives. The 1935 Act adopted criminal penalties for selling goods misrepresented as Indian-produced. This provision, currently located in section 1159 of title 18, United States Code, set fines not to exceed \$500 or imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both. Although this law was in effect for many years, it provided no meaningful deterrent to those who misrepresent imitation arts and crafts as Indian produced. In addition, it required willful intent to prove a violation, and very little enforcement took place. In response to growing sales in the billion-dollar U.S. Indian arts and crafts market of products misrepresented or erroneously represented as produced by Indians, Congress passed the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. This Act is essentially a truth-in-advertising law designed to prevent marketing products as "Indian made" when the products are not, in fact, made by Indians as defined by the Act.⁹ Smith protests this law. Some tribes are not federally documented. Also depending on your tribe you must follow your mother or father's blood lineage. Some tribes go by descendency and some go by blood quantum. So although some people are full bloods neither tribe will recognize them because of their lack of blood quantum. Some refuse to register with the government for fear of being "marked." Therefore they can't sell their art as authentically Native.

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Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 Public Law 101-644

<http://www.artnatam.com/law.html> enhance in many Native American societies. Smith appropriates the pop-culture symbol to disparage and increase awareness of America's domineering culture for failing to concentrate on the state of America's Indigenous population. Smith is engrossed with Native American survival juxtaposed against the material comfort and insensitivity of mainstream American culture that leads to the marginalization of Native peoples and their societal needs.

Sometime around 1961, Andy Warhol began painting cans of Campbell's soup, in every one of the thirty-two varieties that existed at that time. He favored telling a story to people that his mother forced him to consume Campbell's soup and therefore that is why he painted it.

Smith, similarly, uses her own brands of Campbell's soup to convey that Native Americans are forced to rely on foods unfamiliar to most Americans. Most Native Americans also are capable of surviving without modern means of food production.

Venison Stew is a black, white and red composition. The background is done in

shades of scratched and dappled black, white and gray. The can is black, white, and gray, with areas that appear to be scraped and slightly grated. It appears to be slightly dented and uneven, as if purchased in a reduced price section of a grocery store. At the top of the can in a red band is the word “venison” in black. Beneath the red band is a thinner black band with a blank circle in the middle. At the bottom of the front label is a gray band that reads, “stew” which is slightly uneven and also written in black which lends to the can appearing as if it as been roughly handled or stored until the can is swollen and dented. Those who are less affluent often buy cans of food that are damaged to save money.

Christmas

Smith created another similar version of Warhol-inspired soup cans entitled *Christmas*.³⁸ *Christmas* (fig. 4-12) is another commentary on the ills of consumerism and the failure of the American social order to deal with the reality of a large population of their neighbors and fellow citizens who nonetheless, live by different philosophies. Smith implements a spoof of a pop-art representation with a mass-produced product to risibly appropriate the symbol for the Native American population. *Christmas* is a dish containing “posole.” Native Americans taught early American settlers the means of cooking a mixture of dehydrated corn in ashes and water to make the large, swollen-white kernels that Southerners called “hominy” and Southwest Natives called “posole.” This gently piquant vegetable soup, created by mixing hominy and diced green chilies (an additional Native American ingredient), offers an original change to a traditional Thanksgiving or Christmas meal. Posole is a well-known and favored food of Natives

³⁸ *Christmas* is a lithograph that measures 10 x 12.” It was done in a series of 30.

and people of the Southwestern United States. By titling the work *Christmas*, Smith is making a statement that at Thanksgiving celebrations and Christmas revelries, when the majority of Americans are enjoying delicacies and volumes of foods, Native families often make do with much less. American Indians provided the colonizers with food. Ironically, the dominant population either neglects to remember or are ignorant of the fact that not only did Native Americans and (other ethnic groups) help the original pioneers to survive, but American Indians had and still practice a more naturally innate and less commercial way of celebrating the holidays than those that were introduced by their uninvited invaders and colonizers. She reminds the viewers that much of their past relies on the kindness and knowledge of America's first peoples.

Christmas done in bright red, dark and light green reminiscent of yuletide colors is a bit more festive than *Venison Stew*. The background surroundings are circles and spirals, as well as smears and blotches of greens and reds. The spiral is a symbol for the Native people's creation stories that represents their emergence from the underworld. Circles are also important in Native American belief systems since everything exists in a circle, Mother Earth is a circle (Native Americans believed this long before Columbus' time); the sun and moon are circles, and the path that they take each day is also a circle. Life is also a circle, with people being born, becoming adults, then elders, and then dying with its rebirth, and the seasons can be seen as a circle or cycle of seasons. In general, Native Americans do not tend to think in a linear fashion, but instead tend to think of things as existing in circles.

Towards the left side of the piece is a stylized can resembling a Campbell's soup can that displays an illegible red label in the upper portion, with scribbled lines and

splotches of green all over the can's surface. Written near the bottom of the can is the uneven but spontaneous script that reads "Posole." At the lower left corner above Smith's signature is her personal print chop of a teepee.

Smith's Use of Flags and Maps

McFlag

McFlag (fig. 4-13) is a painting of the American flag with Mickey Mouse ears complete with an electrical cord for a tail, requesting viewers to plug in their attention to our ever-changing concepts of nationalism and the allure of ubiquitous consumerism running rampant in our country.³⁹ The diptych composition is a hodgepodge collage of McDonald's advertisements, Disney symbols, and texts layered and integrated into red bands that aim humor at the rampant consumerism in American culture. Some of the text is difficult to decipher due to obstruction by paint and overlapped images. Interjected between the texts are illustrations of Mickey Mouse ears and other objects.

The rectangular, four-sided composition has full-size, round speakers that function at each upper corner as Mickey's all knowing, all hearing ears. *McFlag* has the outward appearance of an American flag with fifty stars, seven red, text-enhanced stripes and six unadorned white stripes. In some Montana tribes, the number seven represents their system for the seasons.

The first red stripe has text that reads "Mc BIG", a Chinese text from a newspaper, "Disney's Kingdom," and "see what get away" with more text obscured by paint." "McBig" is surely another commentary on America's unbridled consumer

³⁹ *McFlag*, 1996, is an oil and mixed media diptych painting on canvas with speakers and electrical cord. It measures 60 x100".

interests. Perhaps Smith is telling us to do more than vote in the elections. The best results come from voting with our money. Smith's inclusion of Chinese text implies conditions surrounding American outsourcing of production to other countries such as China for financial gain. Over all the text speaks of the race to get rich with little or no regard to our happiness of the environment. In these days of commercial production and cutthroat industrial economical conditions, only the strong (and the rich) survive. The inclusion of Chinese text reveals that America is becoming more and more reliant on China, which may or may not be the best alternative for our economy.

The second scarlet stripe has an illustration of people dancing. Its text reads "lost witchcraft, burger, babysitting," "this must be the place", "International," and "Big D." McDonald's seems to have a mesmerizing effect on people, and recently much has been made of the addiction it can cause. McDonald's' restaurants target children as consumers. By targeting children with special food packaging, toys and playgrounds McDonalds aims to perform a type of advertisement that gains children's attention that is similar to media "babysitting." Is it fair to families when food companies use technology to market to children? Using the text from an old McDonalds advertisement "This must be the place" implies that conceivably this is not the right place or way to care for our impressionable children. "International" might imply McDonalds and Disney are both expanding their actual businesses globally including advertising. "The BIG D" refers to Disney's multi-million dollar enterprises of movies and theme parks. Again, this is a means of engaging children both visually and physically that could be seen as lazy parenting. Children spend hours in front of television and watching images that give inadequate representations of gender roles, and inaccurate ethnic representation. The third

red stripe reads, "Don't get malled," "Indian Country Today, and "El costo de vida subia," which translates to "the cost of life was rising," undoubtedly commenting on economic issues in the United States and Mexico." "Don't get malled" is an element of word play. In this day of mall shopping, many small, privately owned businesses suffer and sometimes fail. The situation is a further example of consumer culture in which large corporations eliminate the "little man." There is clearly a play on words between being "mauled" versus being "malled." The second phrase, *Indian Country Today*, alludes to one of the leading Native newspapers in existence. Beginning in 1981, *Indian Country Today* has existed as an influential source of information for Native Americans. It is foremost in truthful and sensible coverage, insightful examination of Native related news, and keen observations. *Indian Country Today* distributes more original information on Native American concerns than any other source.

The fourth stripe has a text that reads, "MC," some Chinese text, "The Last Frontier," "American Indian Film Festival Recognizes Greats with Awards," "Reflections on imagery of yesterday and today," "The method of the madness," and "Look Ma no hands." The Chinese text again suggests that American industries outsource many products to be produced there when America's economy and high rates of unemployment could be partially rectified by producing those goods in the United States. Also, on the other hand China's economy is enhanced by United States consumer expenditures. When considering that interest rates are rising, real estate sales are sluggish, the savings rate is down; energy prices are rising and wage escalation is not in keeping with Gross Domestic Product expansion; what happens to China's development if United States consumer expenditures slow or fail? China will surely endure undesirable changes. Smith is saying

that American consumerism can affect trade and economies worldwide. “Reflections on yesterday” and today, is a response on how much things have changed economically over the years. The past seems like a long lost dream. “The method of the madness” is the lunacy through which industry and credit companies draw people into their web of deceit and industrial greed. “MC” could be another symbol for both McDonald’s and MasterCard, since both contribute to consumption, debt, and addiction. For while it is McDonald’s huge conglomerate that contributes to obesity, other illnesses, and indolent behavior, at the cost of their customers, MasterCard is no better. “American Indian Film Festival Recognizes Greats with Awards” acknowledges the Native film industry, which is overlooked by Hollywood in favor of conglomerates like Disney. Few people want to acknowledge that Native film can exist without relying on the standard stereotypes of Western movies with John Wayne. It is very difficult to get funding for Native made and Native themed films. Native films today can be westerns, but they are told from a different perspective than movies produced in 50s, 60s, and 70s. “Look Ma-no hands” implies that both businesses and everyday people are reckless when they pay no heed to consumer issues. The partial text that read BI [G] passes on the message that big business is taking consumers and the economy by their outrageous practices. The “G” is covered? Could the “BI” signify Bi-cultural?

The next, sixth, red hued stripe contains the words, “LAND OF THE GIANTS,” “Theme parks are riding high,” “Canadian Whiskey,” “An affair to forget,” “sex please,” “Only the steel is gone,” “Mc,” and “Bigness.” “Land of the Giants” is reflective of big business, “Theme parks are riding high” alludes to the Disney’s corporation success. “Canadian Whiskey” and “An affair to forget”, while a play on “An

Affair to Remember” relates that there are high rates of alcoholism in Native communities and the “affair” that takes place with alcoholism should be forgotten and eradicated. Also severe alcoholism causes blackout episodes that are often dangerous for many reasons and are forgotten due to excessive abuse. “Sex please” could refer to our culture’s fading moralities. Also today there are urban legends about discreet sexual references in Disney produced movies. “Mc” is another symbol for McDonalds.

The seventh and final stripe says “Do we need the race for bigness,” and next is the sentence “Directorio de servercios para su casa.” The first line asks if it is necessary to have huge conglomerates. The second line roughly translates to “The director of services for your house.” The next legible text is “Carta America” and the rest of the line is obstructed by paint. It translates to “letter to America.”

This work is clearly a commentary on American industry, big business, and moneymaking ventures at all costs. Smith explains, “Everything in America is for sale including land, water, air, and elections. I think people are going to have to get mad to make change. They’re not mad yet, just going along and being nice. People are afraid of being unpatriotic. I can get away with that a little more because people think it’s just an Indian thing...”⁴⁰

Tribal Map 2001 # 2

On the subject of her map series Smith explains her intent, “We are the original owners of this country. Our land was stolen from us by the Euro-American invaders . . . I can’t say strongly enough that my maps are about stolen lands, our very heritage, our cultures, our worldview, our being . . . Every map is a political map and tells a story---

⁴⁰ Maryann Ullman. “Multi-culturalism, Mastercard and *McFlag*

that we are alive everywhere across this nation . . .”⁴¹

In *Tribal Map 2001 # 2*, (fig.-14) Smith incorporates the American flag and map of the United States to educate viewers about Native relocation. Beginning in the early 1990s Smith appropriated the American flag with a nod to Jasper Johns’ maps. Superficially, Smith’s are maps of the continental US and partial pieces of the Americas. However, they are lively and they possess a sardonic superiority over today’s dissected and Eurocentric contrived maps based on Anglo ideals land ownership, which directly opposed native thoughts on land ownership. After careful consideration, viewers become aware of Smith’s passion for presenting historic tribal land ownership. *Tribal Map 2001 #2* answers the artist’s need to remind the viewer of the first populations of the country and the lands of their birth and existence before forced relocation.⁴²

The composition is yellow, lavender, red, green and brown. Over the outline of the states are laid Native American tribal names and the original sites they occupied. Smith’s work stresses issues surrounding land issues. Smith reminds the viewer of the importance of the land, and her suggestions bring to mind the profoundly sacred and crucial importance of the earth to Native culture. Smith assists the general public to appreciate and comprehend the intrinsic worth of both American Indian culture and earth. It is important that we all need to comprehend true inter-cultural understanding and the value of the universal life we share.

The Silence

⁴¹ Julia Sasse. *Postmodern Messenger*. (Tucson Museum of Art: Tucson, AZ, 2004), 8.

⁴²*Tribal Map 2001 #2* is a mixed media and oil diptych on canvas. It measures 80 x120”.

In *The Silence*,⁴³ (fig.4-14) Smith invites the viewer into an environment of paintings as an active participant. Standing amid rows of paintings, one is compelled to contemplate one's role among hushed kinsmen. The shadowy, faceless forms cannot utter a word. Their silence is overwhelming. They are painted in a spontaneous, loose style, and consist of fragmented, truncated torsos—remnants of a silenced and diminished humanity or society. The forms, with varied palette and brush strokes, range from dark and somber, distinct and linear voids to luminously vivid, blotted metamorphic and organic shapes. These bilateral and reticulated interior views of the human body present what seem to be organs and structures within the chest, as well as opposing views of the spine and vertebrae. According to the artist, these works may be “reminiscent of medical X-rays and even a fluorescent reminder of atomic or nuclear activity.”⁴⁴ The figures are depicted as generic body forms, but an innate desire leads us to try to assign each figure a gender designation. However, their indeterminate features prevent this. They are androgynous, anonymous, and eerily mute. In that context, these silent guardians evoke the human condition. Is their peaceful stance an unspoken demonstration against man's inhumanity to man? Or are the taciturn forms remnants of ancient warriors revived to warn us of impending danger? Smith uses the assembly of figures to convey ideas visually and physically. As simple as the figures seem, they are layered in meaning; they are palpable ideas of human fragility and psychological tension.

Resembling a dressmaker's dummies or mannequins, the figures are silent on many

⁴³ Joni Murphy. *Ancient Admonitions*. (NY: Gustav Heye Center, 2004).

The section on *The Silence* has been previously published.

⁴⁴ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. August 30, 2004

levels. Today, with the spirited debate over the war in Iraq and the current political and economic unrest, we live in a society on the edge of upheaval and change. The artist comments that these “are headless torsos that are mute, cannot speak or hear, and they have no comment, no thoughts and [furthermore] make good representations of a major part of America which for right now is not analyzing this government for themselves but accepting sound bites from the White House.”⁴⁵ Although we may see reminders of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture in these fragmented vestiges of the human form, the artist’s influences derive from various non-Western traditions. True to her Native heritage, Smith integrates indigenous American art forms into her strategically provocative work. Smith explains, “These pieces came directly from a series of paintings in my studio that used Plateau ‘X-ray vision’ figures that appear on sally bags, flat bags, petroglyphs, and Salish house posts.”⁴⁶ Salish customs dictated that each person seek his or her guardian spirit through a series of rituals or vision quests. These spirits were separated into two classifications: those who gave wealth and those who gave healing abilities to tribal members who were designated shamans. In addition, another gift or “power” was given to the recipient. This could include skills such as hunting or basket making, or the strength to be a warrior. In accordance with this belief system, Salish people built both summer and winter homes adorned with carved representations or house posts of the guardian spirits of the highest ranked males and females of each family. These representations were created with a skeletal or anatomically reticulated

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid

appearance⁴⁷

The artist credits the Mexican artist Jose Guadalupe Posada as another indigenous influence. Posada was one of Mexico's most important graphic artists. His politically driven illustrations were reproduced in cartoons, posters, announcements, and newspapers or broadsheets. Posada used skull and skeleton imagery to produce prints that mocked the upper class and well-known political figures. The result was an enormous body of work that is timeless in its critique and parody of Mexico's elite citizenry. Like Posada, Smith uses the stripped or skeletal human form. Although at first glance the small watercolors of *The Silence* may appear to be a departure from the artist's usual style, Smith notes that the series is more appropriately described as "recycled." Such work reflects similar issues and offers a similar impact to her other paintings and drawings. Smith also warns the viewer of previous errors in judgment regarding the frailty of our existence. Her art compels and challenges us to look at contemporary society with a more discerning eye.

Epilogue: Smith's Use of Humor

For hundreds of years Europeans, and later Euro-Americans, suppressed America's Indigenous peoples through assimilation and various forms of social control. Epidemics, war, religious oppression, and forced removal are just a few of the atrocities First Nations peoples experienced. Western standards were forced upon Native peoples. Children were removed from their homes and placed in boarding schools. Social scientists studied Native culture from a perspective that had no relation to Indigenous

⁴⁷ Ibid.

social values. Historically, Native people have witnessed the loss of their language, religion, dress, and life concepts.

Despite attempts to forcibly change their lives, Native peoples have managed to maintain their traditions and values through many means including art. In *Reservation X*, a compilation of essays on post-modern Native art, Charlotte Townsend-Gault remarks, First Nations peoples are connected by what they share historically, cognitively, and spiritually.”⁴⁸ A key to the maintenance of First Nations cultural values and their literal survival was to seek to educate Non-Natives about history and Indigenous life views and belief systems while at the same time seeking to counter stereotypes.

One means by which Native peoples in America have managed to maintain their cultural survival is humor, a feeling valued for its ability to reduce anxiety and fear. Smith mentions the humor found in American Indian art in the preface of *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage*,

Humor has an important role through the Indian world in general. Humor has been a panacea for what ails. The women tend to express their humor in a more subtle way than the men (who are often more blatant and slapstick). Imogene Goodshot’s beaded sneakers and baseball caps are a commentary on modern Indian life and acculturation. Mary Adams’ “Pope’s Basket” begets 164 little baskets on its surface. Indian humor is known to be sardonic, sometimes sinister and it always appears in unlikely places. Little Turtle’s photographs always juxtapose funny and bizarre objects with reality. Humor is considered to have a role along side the art

⁴⁸ Charlotte Townsend Gault, “Let X=Audience” in *Reservation X*, ed. Gerald McMaster. (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press, 1998), 41.

forms, the landscape, storytelling and religion. Humor is a mainstay of Indian life.”⁴⁹

Native Americans from time to time have unjustly been seen as for lacking a sense of humor. Actually that view is fallacious. Native life is abundant with humor, most of it penetratingly sarcastic. Historically, humor was used by Native societies to correct certain people for behavior that was seen as not socially acceptable. By making jokes about a certain act or behavior, people were able to rectify someone's behavior without condemning or shaming them, but by making fun of them. Sometimes trickster figures like coyote, raven, and rabbit were used to tell humorous tales that also acted dually as stories of moral guidelines and acceptable behavior. Other times they illustrated what occurs when one doesn't use good morals or behavior. Also, humor could be seen as a blessing that made life easier. In times of trouble, assimilation, and even death, humor was a miraculous element that helped American Indians survive. What would you have to live for if you couldn't laugh?

Smith sometimes adopts the guise of coyote, a traditional trickster figure, outwitting us with her humor to teach valuable lessons with biting humor and subtlety. Acting as the sly figure coyote, Smith uses her work as an illustrative lesson as she battles the serious topic of politics, stereotypes and cultural issues using clever hilarity teaching us ethics in the exact manner as her trickster alias would. Smith concludes, “We American Indians are alive everywhere across this nation. American Indians have consistently

⁴⁹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage*. (Gallery of the American Indian Community House: New York, 1985), n.p.

endured, using humor and art as part of our cultural support system. We are here to stay”

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⁵⁰Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in “Musacarelle Exhibits Crosses Cultural Lines.” Racelle Ohm, *The Flat Hat*, February 2007. <http://www.flatthatnews.com/variety/302/musacarelle-exhibit-crosses-cultural-lines>.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INFLUENCES IN SMITH'S WORKS

Cultural and historical factors influence the content and production of all art; economic, social, religious, and political and gender forces impact the function, meaning, creation and eventually the success of contemporary art. Smith's work is no different. A great deal of Smith's work meets stereotypes head on. Smith notes, "Indian people have been used in ads the same as animals or objects."¹ As we will see, Smith is evokes a broad spectrum of Native American cultural lore including petroglyphs, buffalos hides, ledger book art, medicinal plants, and her alter ego the trickster figure coyote to connect Native American history and her own cultural heritage with current Native American history, political and ecological issues.

This portion of the dissertation discusses a variety of stereotypes that Native Americans are subjected to in Euro-American societies. Words and images that stereotype people of American Indian legacy are frequently encountered in mainstream film, television, literature, and theatre. These stereotypical attitudes have consequences for Native American people in their day-to-day lives.

A common mistake is the attempt to form English equivalents of original, historic Native names. For instance when "Tatanka Iotanka" is translated as "Sitting Bull," the names and formal associations of the original phrases are lost. Older textbooks tend to use words that reduce intricate and complex peoples to simple objects. Current K-12

¹ Christy Hale. "Jaune Quick-to-See Smith-Masterpiece of the Month"

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_mOSTR/is_4_112/ai_9398886

textbooks also perpetuate many stereotypes about Native Americans. For example, “tribe” is a word met often with derogatory associations. The term brings to mind thoughts of primitivism and it fails to recognize the diversity of America’s Indigenous Peoples. Often repeated but inaccurate, misleading or degrading words and phrases, such as “discovered by Columbus,” “attacking wagon trains,” “savages,” “scalping,” “unfriendly, and” “vanishing race” contribute to this problem. Unfortunately these expressions are often still used although some stereotypes are in retreat. Alternatively words like “settler” and “civilized” are just as offensive, only reversely so.

Even more recent textbooks use over-simplified and general explanations of a hugely diverse people giving very little attention to their multifaceted characteristics. Newer texts sometimes discuss the activities of twentieth century Native Americans and their political conflicts; however, they rarely if ever, analyze how modern policies extend those of the past. Further, they seldom discuss or focus on the present day struggles of American Indians, such as the additional loss of their land and their treaty rights and gambling issues.²

Today’s children may learn the truth in these matters in their secondary and college education, even though the task of the K-12 school instructor is difficult because correct information is not routinely provided. Stereotypes outside the classroom must be confronted and countered as well.³

A primary source of stereotypes outside the classroom are sports team mascots,

² Devon Mihesuah. *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities* (Clarion: Atlanta, Georgia), 68

³ Arlene Hirschfelder, Paulette Molin Fairbanks, Yvonne Watkim. *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children*. (Scarecrow press, Inc: Lanham, Marilyn, 1999), 8.

are among the most pervasive and offensive. Mascots have been around for years to provide pride and spirit. However, Native Americans are virtually the only ethnic group chosen and used for mascots. Native American mascots are based on stereotypical assumptions about Native Americans. These include ethnic slurs such as “redskin”, “brave” and “chief.” These team names alone are insulting, but the images and skits played out by mascots can be far more xenophobic and are insulting to Native Americans. One very disrespectful example was the costume and regular dance routine of the University of Illinois “Chief.” This mascot would parade around sports events doing exaggerated dances and generalized Native “behavior.” This type of racism is not limited to Native Americans.⁴

All of these clichés are harmful and perpetuate distorted perceptions. There are many ways way that non-Natives can gain a better understanding of Native American life and traditions. This can be accomplished by gaining knowledge of historical and contemporary Native American life through art. In the specific case of Smith, art is used strategically to confront stereotypes in a metaphorical way. She states, “I think people often can hear a message with humor much easier than with bitterness.”⁵ Through her multimedia art forms, Smith tackles existing Native concerns, directly and indirectly

⁴An unusual example occurred in the town of Pekin, Illinois for years had a mascot named the “the Pekin Chinks.” The students had a mascot “Chink” and “Chinkette” who met the opposing team members and cheerleaders in pseudo Chinese garb. In 1981 they were forced to change their

⁵ Julie Jenkins Strohkorb. Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. The Chrysler Museum of Art. January 2000. <http://www.chrysler.org/wom/wom0100.asp>

visualizing the connection between her Native history and current realities to construct a satirical comedy that addresses the issues without an offensive or overbearing manner.

Her Native authority and the deep history of her culture inform Smith's art. Smith evokes a broad spectrum of Native American cultural lore such as petroglyphs, buffalo hides, ledger-book art, cave images, and medicinal plants and her personal and her alter ego, the trickster figure coyote, to connect Native American history and her own ancestral heritage with current Native American cultural, political and ecological issues.

Religious and Political Influences

Missionaries who arrived in America did not always recognize the American Indians of North America, as human beings who possessed a diverse and vibrant cultural heritage of their own. As an alternative, these "intruders" created descriptions of Native peoples as murderous heathens and heroic fighters; desperate alcoholics needing deliverance; injured parties of treachery, vice, and self-indulgence. Christians and missionaries might see the relationship of religion in the Flathead Nation, as an act of providence. However, other may view it as an act of forced submission and compulsory assimilation. Native Americans had their own form of religions that weren't necessarily "wrong" because they were different.

The Europeans wanted to "enlighten" those they mistakenly called "savages" by informing them of God and Jesus. In the nineteenth century, the U.S. government was determined to assimilate the Native peoples by separating them onto reservations and turning the reservations over to different Christian missionaries. This activity was scarcely comprehensible to the Indian Natives. Since none of their nearly six hundred tribal traditions stressed conformity, they could not understand why these Christians

wanted everyone to worship in the same way. Assimilation techniques were often brutal: one of the saddest was the removal of children from their families to attend missionary boarding schools where they were disciplined for such things as using their Native language. Many Native historians compare this period to a Holocaust that deprived them of their language and traditions and replaced them with meaningless guarantees of a God of love that disciplined them in ways that were foreign to their existing ideas of spirituality and religion.

Acculturation, which involves the process by which Native peoples were forced to absorb Euro-centric culture, has been a preferred subject for several artists. Smith's work *Paper Dolls for a Post-Columbian World* (fig 5-1) is a spectacular and witty declaration on the impact of forced religious conviction and assimilation.⁶ The multi-media work is separated into eight registers: in the first illustration on the left is written: *Paper Dolls for a Post-Columbian World with Ensembles Contributed by US Government*. The other top three registers include depictions of paper dolls of Ken Plenty Horses, Barbie Plenty Horses, and Bruce Plenty Horses. They each have accessories that are placed in the 2nd row of four registers. They include “the Flathead Headdress collected by Whites to decorate homes,” “the special outfit for trading land with the US Government for whisky with gunpowder in it,” “the maid's uniform for cleaning houses of White people after good education at Jesuit Schools or government school,” and “matching smallpox suits for all Indian Families after the government sent wagonloads of smallpox infected

⁶ Gail Tremblay. “When Word and Image dance Together,” in. *Subversions and Affirmations*, Alejandro Anreus, Ed. (Jersey City Museum: New Jersey, 1996), 28-29. *Columbian Dolls for a Post Columbian World* is pastel and pencil on paper and it measures 40’ X 29”.

blankets to keep them warm.”

Since 1850, Native groups in the United States have undergone little positive change culturally and artistically. In World War I many Native Americans fought but were not officially recognized citizens. Prior to the change of the 1930s, the government employed a total repression of Native traditions and religious conviction. In 1924 American Indians were finally awarded citizenship status that was welcomed by the majority Native Americans. Following the “New Deal” during the 1930s and 1940s the government allowed the Natives to return to self-governance. In the 1950’s the United States government adopted innovative strategies intended to hasten the progression of Indian integration into mainstream culture, including transferring Natives from reservations to inner-city areas.

The 1960s ushered in new consciousness among Americans about Native people. The Civil Rights, counterculture, and ethnic rights movements regenerated an interest in American Native American culture, belief systems, and arts. A renewed recognition and development of Native American art attained a new recognition. As a result of Euro-centric involvement in Native American traditions, Native artisans began to include non-Native resources and images into their art. In the past one hundred years, American Indian cultural production has extended beyond the utilitarian and ceremonial to include painting on paper and canvas, sculpture, conceptual art, performance art, multimedia installations, and computer generated/aided art. This was a change from much earlier times when Native creations often functioned as art objects and or for the most part, utilitarian objects.

Flathead, Salish and Kootenai Arti History Leading to Modern Conventions

Rock Art from the Columbian Plateau

Commencing at the river valleys of the center of the British Columbia south to the knolls of northernmost Oregon and east to the continental divide in western Montana, the Columbian Plateau contains numerous precipices and rocks exhibit carved and painted designs fashioned by early artists that inhabited this locale, the Columbia Plateau, going back as many as seven thousand years.⁷ Communicating a fundamental communal and sacred aspect of the lives of and hunter-gatherers, rock art can be mesmerizing in its historical strength and obscurity. It is an inimitable, reminder of past civilization and still exists today as a cultural source. The art is a visual recording of Native histories, traditions, and ideas that existed through centuries. There are five regions on the Columbia Plateau, each with its own version of the rock art classification recognized as being linked exclusively to the locale. The first, in western Montana, rock art designs articulate the ceremonial quest of a spirit guider from the ordinary earth. In the second, British Columbia, rayed curves over the heads of human figures illustrate the assistance of a guardian spirit. In the third, Twin figures on the central Columbia Plateau illustrates a different principle --the special supremacy of twins--and hunt panoramas celebrate victory of the pursuit. The contorted, grinning suggestive face of deity named Tsagiglalal

⁷ When this text refers to the Pacific Northwest, it is the northwest area of North America. There are numerous somewhat overlying description but it should not be confused with the territory. The phrase "Northwest Coast" is frequently used when referring simply to the coastal regions. The term Northeast Plateau describes the inland areas, although they are generally referred to as "the interior. *Gonorthwest.com*.
<http://www.gonorthwest.com/visitor/about/northwest.htm>

or, “she who watches,” in lower Columbia, the fourth locale, symbols and hieroglyphs, bear witness to the Plateau Natobes' "death cult" a reaction to the European illnesses that annihilated their communities between 1700 and 1840. The fifth site, located upon the southeastern Plateau, illustrations of humans riding horseback identify the acceptance, post1700 of the equestrian and social lifestyles of the northwestern Great Plains Indians. Regardless, of geographic distinction in importance, likeness in design and methods connect the art and pictographs of all five regions. Human beings, numerous animal species depicted on the Plateau, geometric designs, inexplicable life forms, and counting marks, carved and or painted, appear all the way through the Columbia Plateau.⁸

Historical Issues of Gender: Traditional Women’s Art of the Plateau

Mid-Columbian Plateau women were some of the finest basket makers in the region. They only produced their baskets only in the winter when both food-gathering and food-processing tasks were long finished and families went to live in their winter lodges. Traditionally, women assembled on mats facing the sunrise as they manipulated soft vegetable fiber into sally bags, soft twined circular bags.

Traditional women’s art of the Northwest Plateau consisted of cornhusk baskets and hide work, such as geometrically designed and painted parfleche bags.⁹

Cornhusk baskets and cradle baskets were among the most numerous articles produced and found in Columbia River households. Parfleches are rawhide saddlebags or Indian suitcases. (See glossary.) They functioned as a utilitarian type of carrying case used on

⁸ James D. Keyser. *Rock Art of the Columbia Plateau*. (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1992)

⁹ Janet Berlo. & Ruth B. Phillips. *Native North American Art*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 1998), 130-133.

the Columbia Plate and were used to store and transport food or other material. They were exchanged for other items. Parlfleche bags were constructed from rawhide and decorated with mineral-based paint. They were painted in a geometric design typical for the Columbia Plateau. Smith acknowledges these items as sources of inspiration for her geometric and abstracted work.

The Plateau women also created vividly colored beaded bags, gauntlets, and moccasins. The original beadwork was designed with traditional geometric designs. As women, the creators of such works of art had distinct roles, but equivalent standing to the men in the traditional civilizations. Plateau girls were taught to learn the skills that were expected of them. They were taught hide work, storytelling and the oral tradition, embroidery, basket making, food preparation, and music. Later as the young women became mothers and grandmothers, they passed on these traditions to their families.

Around 1850, American Indians of the Plateau became eager to obtain glass beads. They originally sewed with deer and various animal sinews. Once the Native Americans of that area acquired cotton thread and beads were implemented to decorate many items. They began to embellish clothing and other items, such as saddle blankets, as well as other equipment. In some cases, beads substituted for natural resources like porcupine quills or mineral paint pigments. Once the indigenous peoples were able to obtain these different materials of embellishment and they started to include them into their works, always testing original methods and patterns. This art brought in much desired income, including trade goods, food, and even money--for the family. The flat beaded bag is a form that initiated in the Plateau region. In the early 1800s, fur traders and missionaries transformed innovative materials and design ideas to the area. As a creative channel and

means of expression, the beaded items were sold to collectors and tourists who visited the area.¹⁰

Animal Hides and Ledger Books

Roughly speaking, until a little over a century ago Native artistic expression was mainly a form of spiritual expression. It existed as a type of shorthand employed to document familial and tribal history. Tribal history was recorded on animal hides. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century hide paintings are of two basic types. Because of gender hierarchy, women painted geometric abstract designs on their works. This type of decoration was limited to their gender and ultimately reflected their artistic roles in Native society. Men depicted the battles, historical occurrences, etc. Stick figures, faces lacking individual characteristics, rudimentary but conformist illustrations of animals and a group of consistent symbols were used to convey certain narratives. Smith has the ability to combine the both men and women's traditional designs without undermining tradition by implementing all stylized versions of all of the traditional forms with contemporary motifs and messages.

As warfare and constant relocation became the norm for Natives, the only items that could be safely kept were those that could be easily retrieved and carried away quickly. Ledger books were suitable for safeguarding historical information and other vital information. During the periods of defeat and assimilation, ledger books, pencils, and inks were often obtained by trade and often by raids as the bounty of warfare.

Flathead Ledger Art

The Five Crows Ledger is a compilation of ledger art created by members of the

¹⁰ Berlo & Phillips, 133.

Flathead tribe. The style was developed from Plains Indian Biographic style of art. The Plains Indian Biographic style is divided into Prehistoric, Proto-historic, and Historic. Each period consists of representational and non-representational figures. After Native people came into contact with European and American artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin, Native art became more naturalistic in its orientation.

Until then, the pictorial history of the individuals and groups, memoirs or biographical art usually features action scenes of naturalism illustrating principally horses, people, weaponry, and living quarters. The Mandan warriors Sih-Chidä (Yellow Feather) and Mah to tope (Four Bears) created the initial existing illustrations of Northern Plains' ledger art in 1834.¹¹

The most basic drawings contain fairly unfamiliar images. Some survive in archives, but most have vanished while some have been lost. One of existing examples is the “Five Crows Ledger,” a series of thirteen drawings gathered, translated, and with explanatory notes written by Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet during his missionary work to the Flathead Indians of western Montana, 1841 to 1847.¹²

Smith often employs Flathead ledger figures in her art, mostly are warriors. One appears in *War is Heck*, 2001, astride the central figure of a horse with the wings of an angel. This is merely one example of her many interpretations of her culture's ledger art.

¹¹James D. Keyser. *The Five Crows Ledger: Biographic Warrior of the Flathead Warriors*. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2000), 17.

¹² Keyser, n.p.

Smith as “Coyote”

As mentioned, coyote is a trickster figures that teaches us about our faults and foibles. There are many reasons to compare Smith with coyote. Coyote is vital to the legacy of the Flathead tribe and was a particular comrade of the Flatheads. He bayed to caution of the approach of adversaries, barking three times to advise the people of imminent danger from unknown people entering the area.

Coyote was remembered in tales in the wintertime. Stories were shared among the women, and they also told the stories to the children. Coyote tales are not told in the summer--it is forbidden. These traditional stories were told to exemplify moral principles for younger members of the group. Today Smith still uses coyote to teach lessons and morals. It is something from her heritage that she shares with others so that they gain knowledge and a certain instructive power. Smith can be viewed as an alter ego of coyote, teaching us morals much like coyote would do--in a sly but meaningful manner

Animals generally have special powers in Native mythology. They hold special powers that control supernatural forces that determine human providence. Particular trees and rocks as well as the animals have qualities and characteristics that hold strong powers. The Flatheads' connection to the land and the earth's living things was spiritual. They did not take control of the land, rather earth was considered the mother that looked after them and prolong their life. This view is the reason. Smith uses these elements in her works. The intrinsic power of animals and inanimate symbols confers the ability to convey strong messages, and Smith knows the importance of nature and animals have to

contribute to issues of great concern.¹³

Historical Influences on Native Art

In 1872 various groups of men including Cheyennes, Arapahos, Comanches, Kiowas, and Caddoes were forced into a prison camp in Fort Marion, Florida. The camp was under the control of Captain Richard Pratt, who eventually became the founder of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School. Basically these unfortunate men were victims of cultural experimentation. They soon grew homesick and longed for activities to keep their imprisonment far from their minds. Pratt supplied them with supplies to draw. Although Pratt eventually came to stand for everything anti-Indian, he supported their work to keep their morals from declining. They depicted past feats and familiarity with the Plains life they once knew.

Something surprising began to happen to their art. Driven by homesickness and deep psychological distress, the art they developed was something innovative: true personal manifestations of their imaginations and life. They began to arrive at their own styles and even began signing their works. The pre-existing conventional style of symbols and pictographs began to vanish. Following their imprisonment, they were eventually allowed to return home. Some became religious leaders, church leaders, and clergy members. Others went home but remained active in art production, drawing scenes from the days of their imprisonment among other things.

Sometime around 1918 a group known as “The Early Kiowa School” was in its

¹³ John Fahey. *The Flathead Indians*. (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, Oklahoma, 1974), 5. See next page.

Fahey explains “the Flatheads affinity for the land and its creatures was spiritual Indians did not conquer land or bring it under their sway, they regard the earth as a mother.”

earliest development. A group of young Kiowas, then located in Oklahoma, became fervently involved in producing art--mostly drawings and sketches. These were no commonplace young men. They were sons and grandsons of chiefs and medicine men. Sometimes they were fortunate enough to obtain good paper and watercolors. But usually they used notebook paper "borrowed" from school. A field matron at the Anadarko, Oklahoma, agency began to encourage the young men by giving them art supplies. By 1918 she began to take their work to a dealer in Taos, New Mexico who bought the works in Taos, New Mexico¹⁴

These young men took their art very seriously. It became a venue for them to express their heritage. To learn about their past, they sat with tribal elders to hear of historical events. They sat with family members and intently gathered information from the oral tradition to illustrate events of which they had no direct knowledge. They began to lose a desire for schooling and wanted to concentrate on their art. Their academic careers were not the best, but Ms. Peters made sure they were enrolled into the St. Patrick's mission school under the guidance of Father Aloysius Hitta. In 1927 and 1928 they soon caught the attention of a professor from the School of Art at the University of Oklahoma named Oscar B. Jacobsen. He took the young men in and provided a welcoming environment in Norman, at the University. There were six men--Spencer Ash, Jack Hokteah, Monroe Tsatoke, Stephen Mopope and one woman, Louise Smokey.¹⁵ They established a spot in a room of the art department and Jacobsen took it upon himself

¹⁴ Arthur Silberman, Guest Curator in *100 Years of Native American Painting*, James K. Reeves, ed. (Austin, Texas: The Oklahoma Museum of Art and Arthur Silberman, 1978), 15.

¹⁵ Silberman, 16.

to make them feel at home. Eventually there was an exhibition of their work at the University. In mere months they were exhibiting outside of Oklahoma. They showed their work at the convention of the American Federation of Arts in Denver. They began to show all across the United States. They exhibited in Czechoslovakia and soon had a portfolio produced in France. They painted at length in the 1930s, working for the Works Progress Administration.

Their style is immediately recognizable. The works have an immediate ornamental feeling with a showy use of color. Their color is confident and uses strong distinctions. The subject matter is usually single figures or minor groups of people and dancers. They portrayed Native dances, portraits, and scenes of humorous situations, with some illustrations of religious practices. They also employed realism with topics astutely observed and adroitly differentiated from previous Native art.

The Influence of Native Modernism

The majority of White Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thought Native American Indians incapable of creating inventive or groundbreaking works of art. More exactly, they only recognized American Indian artists as functioning exclusively in a communal approach, following static, antiquated traditions. When American Indian artists moved away from their collective historical artistic practices and used Western media, numerous reviewers, academics, and collectors considered their creations as not “genuinely native.” Art historians today have begun to consider interactions between art made by made Native Americans and art produced by the European and American modernists. Thus, some contemporary art historians are attempting to place Native American modernists into “the modernist canon.”

In the 1960s and the 1970s Blackbear Boison, Oscar Howe, Rafael Median, Jerome Tiger, and Fritz Scholder developed specialized skills and styles of prominent distinctiveness. This brief overview of the change in modern U.S. Indian policies and the changing perception of Native Americans and their art from roughly 1880 up to 1940 reveals these artists to be an integral part of the Native Modernist movement.

This section will feature several modern Indian artists who defied the particular position of Western modern art and culture. The individuals included are in one way or another a “cultural amalgam.” Most are painters who developed as artists in the 1930s through the 1950s and are men. The Native artists Oscar Howe (Sioux), George Morrison (Ojibwe), and Richard West (Cheyenne) will be examined in some detail. They were raised as insignificant figures to their Native populations. Some lived for long periods away from the reservations in large urban centers. Some served the United States in World War II. Due to their exclusive transitional position connecting Indian and Western art realms; most of them proceeded as “artistic negotiators,” interpreting Native wisdom and ethics to Caucasians and others unfamiliar with Native concepts and ideals.

Most of these artists strengthened the vast differences of the individual cultures by connecting Native American tradition and Modernist trend. American Indian painters became Modernists when they included elements of Western modernism into their work. Native artists themselves became more modern when they became more like Western peoples and left their homelands and reservations.

Smith and her contemporaries followed the Modernist movement. It is important to provide not only the historical background of Native life and acculturation but also to include Smith’s predecessors to make available information as to the evolution of

contemporary art. To provide this type of background information enlightens the reader as to how Smith's art came about through the innovations of her artistic forerunners. Smith clarifies, "There are some historians who are calling my generation Indian Modernists--our work isn't stylized enough nor is our work a movement either...like other college educated Indians, we each developed our work from multiple and diverse sources based on our own tribal affiliations plus our exposure to worldwide art sources and our personal travels to museum exhibitions and other countries."¹⁶ Although Smith views Modernism as very different from her work there are always going to be remnants and similarities Derived from the modernist movement that led to the complex yet growing movement away from "traditional" Native expression into the art that exists today.¹⁷

Oscar Howe was of Yanktonai Dakota descent. He was born May 13, 1915 and died October 7, 1983. He was an American Indian artist renowned mostly for watercolor/gouache paintings. A descendant of Sioux Chiefs, Howe was a student and eventually a graduate of Dorothy Dunn's celebrated art curriculum at Santa Fe, New Mexico Indian School. He served in World War II. He received a master's degree in art at the University of Oklahoma. Howe was one of the first American Indian modern artists and his initial works are comparable to other work created at the Santa Fe Indian School. Eventually he created an individual style that was very much his own. Throughout the 1930s he worked for the WPA in South Dakota .He was employed to create a set of painted murals for the municipal auditorium in Mobridge, South Dakota, where he later

¹⁶ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. August 14, 2007.

¹⁷ Ibid

painted a mural in the dome of the Carnegie Library and he also designed sections for the Corn Palace. As an academic, from 1957 to 1983, he was Professor of Art at the University of South Dakota, in Vermillion.

Beginning in early 1950s, Howe started to reject the Santa Fe style in preference for a newer abstracted and individual process of painting. By 1960, his work was distinctive for his striking use of vivid color, energetic motion, and impeccable use of line. These characteristics endowed Howe's paintings with a modernist tendency, but he founded his approach on the abstract tradition of Northern Plains Indian art, frequently alluding to the flawless linearity of hide paintings as a standard foundation of motivation.

In reviews and articles on American Indian modern art, a single action of Howe is often referred to as a turning point. In 1958 he was eliminated from an exhibition of American Indian art at the Philbrook Museum because his work *Umine Wacipe* failed to meet the aesthetic principles of "conventional" Native American art. Howe protested, "Are we to be held back forever with one phase of Indian painting that is the most common way? Are we to be herded like a bunch of sheep, with no right for individualism, dictated to as the Indian has always been, put on reservations and treated like a child and only the White Man know what is best for him... but one could easily turn to become a social protest painter. I only hope the Art World will not be one more contributor to holding us in chains."¹⁸ This statement led to the recognition of the aesthetics of abstraction within the art society. By openly advocating his artistic style and philosophy, Howe created freedom for American Indian contemporary fine art. Being named Artist Laureate of South Dakota honored him as well.

¹⁸ Oscar Howe quoted in Anthes, 161.

It would appear that Howe's struggle to be accepted into the American Indian art realm would be similar to Smith's intentions for the Grey Canyon Group. Freed by the strength of the Modernists Smith's generation of artists was taking contemporary Native art a step further.

Born on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation in Grand Marais, Minnesota in 1919, George Morrison died in 2000. He was a graduate from the Minnesota School of Art and obtained scholarships for study in Paris and New York City. He was recognized for the wood collage landscapes he created. Morrison deemed himself first and foremost a painter. By merging the free and poignant method of the Abstract Expressionists with linear patterns and disjointed facades related to Cubism, Morrison fashioned a style that was entirely his own creation. Desiring to be known merely as an American artist, he confronted the concept that American Indian artists were obliged to design traditional "Indian" works as stipulated by the art market. Morrison's wish to study modern techniques and approaches enabled him to develop into one of the first American Indians to break into the New York art scene. According to Anthes, "Morrison was for the first time in his life, free to not be Indian."¹⁹

Smith is one of many American Indian artists who admired Morrison. Morrison was the only Native American artist that is often included with the better-known Abstract Expressionists. Smith creates art in simultaneously symbolic and abstract manners of representation. Smith's connection to the New York School style is well known. The gritty surface and painterly implementation of her paintings are features of Smith's powerful expressionist method and features that originate from her education as an

¹⁹ Anthes, 110.

Abstract Expressionist in her early educational career. This style signifies one particular aspect of the combined, and characteristically abstract, non-typical American Indian conventions that Smith employs. Dick West is another artist that seemed to share some personality qualities and belief systems with Smith.

Dick West was a Cheyenne Indian artist and educator (Cheyenne name Wah-pah-nah-yah). Walter Richard "Dick" West was born in Darlington Agency, Oklahoma, on September 8, 1912, to his father Lightfoot West and his mother Rena Flying Coyote. West first attended Concho Indian Boarding School and his high school graduation was from Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1935. He later attended Bacone College from 1936 to 1938 and then was the first Native that obtained a bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1941.²⁰ West also received a Master's degree in fine arts in 1950, both from the University of Oklahoma. In Phoenix, he studied mural painting techniques with Olaf Nordmark in 1941-42. West then began more graduate study at Northeastern State University, the University of Tulsa, and Redlands University in California.

His career started as a teacher at Phoenix Indian School in 1941. West served in the U.S. Navy during World War II from 1942 to 1946. After the war, he again taught at Phoenix Indian School from 1946-47. He presided over the art department in Bacone College in Okmulgee, Oklahoma from 1947 to 1970. He was also the chair of Humanities Department at Haskell Indian Junior College from 1970 to 1977. During the classic modern period of Indian art, 1946-80, West mentored generations of student artists all while exhibiting worldwide, achieving numerous awards, completing commissions, and illustrating books. He was a well known and much sought after lecturer, exhibition judge,

²⁰ Anthes, 149.

and highly recognized sign linguist, donning his Cheyenne bonnet and buckskins. He held that schooling was the means of survival of Natives and people. In general he extolled the importance of research to his students. In 1941, West accepted a WPA-PWA mural commission for the U.S. Post Office in Okemah, Oklahoma. He actually won the commission over his instructor, Acee Blue Eagle. West was granted two grand awards from Philbrook Indian Annual, in 1949 for *Dance of the Soldier Societies* and in 1955 he shared the award with Allan Houser for his work *Peyote Vision*. The painting according to Anthes was based on the imagery associated with the drug used in the Native American Church.”²¹ In 1954 he began a series of eight oil paintings entitled *Indian Christ*, a sort of tongue in cheek series that depicted the collective “universality” of Jesus Christ by depicting biblical scenes with Natives as Jesus and other biblical characters.²²

West was known for his use of the traditional flat style of Indian painting and was also a leader in modern abstract and semiabstract painting. He did sculpture as well. Characteristics of his work were complicated color, fine brushwork, and exhaustive representation of anatomy. West’s subject matter was the American Indian, particularly the Cheyenne tribe, a subject of his on which he was an authority. He exhibited in

²¹ Anthes, 151. It is true that peyote is used in the NAC (Native American Church) ceremonies but many Native Americans would dispute the term as a drug.

²² Ruthe Blaylock Jones. “West, Walter Richard Sr.” *Oklahoma’s Historical Society Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/W/WE015.html>. On April 13, 2007 Ms. Jones was a guest speaker at Haskell Indian Nations University at the grand opening of the Dick West Gallery. Mr. West’s family was also in attendance. They stressed that because the Senior Mr. West went to boarding schools he lived to change these institutions to schools of higher learner.

countless exhibitions and he held many honors. His son is Richard West, an attorney and the former director of the National Museum. Smith is much more like West than it may appear on the surface of their work. She, too, mentors students all over the United States, and she travels constantly, much of it paid for with her own money. Similarly, what is not well known is that both West and Smith supported art programs and students with personal encouragement and financial assistance (from their own funds.) While not stylistically comparable, they both cared a great deal for students, furthering the academic and critical position of Native American art.

Smith strongly stresses the importance of research and academics strenuously. She believes that education is the only way Native students will ever be taken seriously. She, too, has exhibited all over the world and won many prestigious awards. She does commissions, public works, and student workshops. She jurors art shows. She is completely immersed in the task of educating others. She truly cares about students, other peoples, and the fate of the world. She truly cares and tries to convey her empathy and acute sense of world politics and academic knowledge. Smith's life and her art may seem unconventional or overly impracticable, but it is Smith's "vision" or mission." Smith has been quoted many times as saying, "My art, my life experience, and my tribal ties are totally enmeshed. I go from one community with messages to the other, and I try to enlighten people."²³

In the 1960s and the 1970s the artists Blackbear Boison, Rafael Median, Jerome Tiger, and Fritz Scholder all created specialized skills and individual styles. One of the

²³"Jaune Quick-to-See Smith." National Museum of Women in the Arts: The Permanent Collection. [http:// www.nmwa.org/collection/profile.asp?LinkID=421](http://www.nmwa.org/collection/profile.asp?LinkID=421)

most recognized and one of the earlier controversial figures in the Santa Fe art scene was Fritz Scholder (1937-2005.) He became one of the most prominent and notorious American Indian artists of the 20th century. He was born in Minnesota, and was one-quarter Luiseno. The majority of Scholder's influential works were post-modern in emotional aesthetics and rather Pop Art in their implementation. Scholder desired to analyze critically and to eradicate the mythology of the Native American. In the 1960s he was a teacher at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. Scholder inspired a group of students that are now well-known artists.

During the summer of 1955, Scholder went to the Mid-West Art and Music Camp at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas. He was president of the art club and “best boy artist.” University of Kansas Professor Robert B. Green took Scholder in and worked with him. Scholder graduated from Ashland High School in Wisconsin in 1956 and continued his education at Wisconsin State University in Superior. Scholder and his family moved to Sacramento, California in 1956, he worked closely with Wayne Thiebaud.

Scholder at all times worked in sequences of paintings. His new series on the American Indian portraying the “authentic Native” found an instant debate in 1967. Scholder was the first artist to paint Natives with such accoutrements as American Flags, beer cans, and cats. His targets were the loaded national stereotypes and culpability of the domineering society. Scholder was not raised in an Native American environment and his inimitable point of view could not be ignored. In 1969 he resigned from the IAIA and journeyed to Europe and North Africa. Afterwards he found his way back to Santa Fe and lived in a small house and studio located on Canyon Road. He worked with Tamarind

press, lectured all over the country and eventually traveled to Egypt to study art and work. He received numerous awards and honors and was featured on PBS on a special presentation on his life and work.²⁴ Ironically the work he produced in Europe was never as successful as his Indian portraits. Thus, regardless of Scholder's attempts his desire to distance himself from his "Indianness" was never fully realized.

Smith gave Scholder credit for helping her gain entrance into some well-known galleries. It also appears as if Smith was inspired by his iconography. She includes cats and American flags into her work. It must be noted, however, that many artists were influenced by Scholder's defying Native art traditions, and the use of his symbols and icons can be seen in many prominent artist's work. Scholder also fought his entire life to be seen as more than "a Native American artist."²⁵ Without forerunners like Howe, West and Scholder, Smith may have never realized what Scholder and the others railed against.

²⁴ *Fritz Scholder*. Copyright Fritz Scholder. http://www.scholder.com/scholder_bio.html

²⁵ Silberman, 29.

CHAPTER VI

NATIVE AMERICAN PUBLIC ART

The most public of “public arts ” in North Americas are totem poles.¹ Carved from cedar logs, they decompose easily in the damp forest environment of the Northwest Coast. Stories by European invaders tell of found before 1800. This art form probably began as house posts, and later they functioned as funerary urns and memorial symbols, eventually evolving into signs of clans (crest poles) and ancestral affluence and status. Today many Native artists carve totem poles on commission, typically taking the opportunity to instruct apprentices in the challenging art of traditional carving and its related woodworking. Such modern poles are almost always created in traditional styles, although some artists have felt free to include modern subject matter or use nontraditional styles in their execution.

In Smith’s Salish tradition, house posts were publicly displayed as a form of public sculpture.² Salish customs dictated that each person seek his or her guardian spirit through a series of rituals or vision quests. The spirits were separated into two categories—those who brought healing forces to a person and abilities and those who gave wealth and community power to the individual.³

¹ Petroglyphs probably existed before totem poles, although most did not function as art, they may have functioned as art.

² See Chapter 4 for further information on Salish house poles.

³ Joni Murphy. *Ancient Admonitions*. (Smithsonian Museum of the American Institute of American Indian Art: Washington, D.C., 2004) n.p. This section has been published before in an exhibition pamphlet for the *Cultural Continuum* Exhibition at the Gustav-Heye Center in New York, City, 2004.

Today the expression “public art” generally means works of art in any medium, which were planned and completed with the explicit idea of being placed for dramatic and aesthetic effect in and for the community to appreciate. Public statues, sculptures, buildings and historical memorials are probably the oldest and most obvious types of government sanctioned community art. Architecture also can the most common function as public art. Today street furniture, lighting and graffiti are also considered public art. Public art is not confined to material matter. It can include performance art and poetry as well because these forms have strong public elements.

Public sculpture art is often made of sturdy material to deter vandalism and weather. Permanent works are sometimes incorporated into architecture and the landscape. For example, Claus Oldenberg’s outdoor public works have existed and provided aesthetic entertainment for decades. Interactive public art such as hydraulophones, which are musical instruments and fountains that play music, are also forms of public art. Some of these forms of public art are created to encourage spectators to participate.

Some public art is meant to be transient or even subversive such as the temporary installations and performance pieces by Keith Haring, executed without permission in the New York City Subway System. Such examples of unsolicited public art can be an effective tool for social emancipation or political expression. There are many examples of transient art in urban areas. Especially in Los Angeles and other areas where ethnic groups use art to express their thoughts and identities, including gang related issues, poverty and the realities of their social living environments.

Public Commissions

Smith is a prolific artist who has explored many mediums, including painting, drawing, printed works, and public art. These public works vary in scope and location, but their theme or motivation always involves her concern with Native and environmental issues.

Smith's involvement in public commissions began in 1985. For the purpose of this dissertation, the focus on Smith's public art commissions will be primarily on her more or less permanent projects of prominence: the Yerba Park Sculpture Garden, the Denver International Airport, and the Western Seattle Cultural Trail. They were produced in 1994, 1995, and 1996 respectively. Following the discussion of these three larger projects, several smaller projects will be discussed. According to Smith, the first two projects discussed involved an immense amount of travel and collaboration "both projects took about four years of traveling back and forth to meetings with architects, arts council administrators and city council members. Drawings would have to be adjusted, materials changed over time for both and maquettes had to be built for Yerba Buena since it was dimensional."⁴

Yerba Buena Park

Seattle's first public project was the Yerba Buena Park Sculpture Garden in San Francisco. It was a circular seating area with a reflection pond built to honor the Native people who were once buried on the actual site. (fig.6-1) This park is located on the roof of the Moscone Convention Center Parking Garage. From a skating rink, a carousel, and

⁴ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. 11/02/05.

children's park, to tributes to Martin Luther King and the Native people who once lived on the very land of the sculpture garden, Yerba Buena Park is a radical mix of commercialism and artistic acts of contrition. It is a fully manufactured park, complete with grass and trees covering polystyrene dirt.⁵ For the site dedicated to Native people, Smith enlisted the support of James Luna, a noted performance artist and a member of the Diegueno/Luiseno nations from southern California. Smith chose him because of his cultural connection to the location of the project. He is from a tribe that originated in that area of California, if not in the modern San Francisco area itself.⁶ As mentioned the convention center was constructed over a Native burial ground of the Ohlone people, also a Native nation that originated in California. So, according to Smith, a tribute to them would be an appropriate choice.⁷ Its title, "Oche wat te ou" is in the Ohlone language and roughly translates to "reflections" or "see yourself in this place, under this sky."⁸ Smith and Luna worked directly with an Ohlone woman who advised them on the text. Smith recalls that it means, "to recognize the people who came before and the environment you're surrounded with."⁹ Surrounding the pool are plants and large, irregular shaped stones. Smith's concept was to build an area to provide a natural backdrop for Native American activities, dramas, and other productions.

⁵ Lucy Lippard. "Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Public Art: Generosity with an Edge." *Jaune Quick-to See Smith: Subversions / Affirmations* edited by Alejandro Anreus. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Subversions and Affirmations" shown at The Jersey City. (Jersey City Museum: Jersey City, 1996), 85.

⁶Lippard, 85.

⁷ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal Communication to the author. 11/23/05

⁸ Lippard 85.

⁹ Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal Communication to the author. 11/23/05.

Smith found the work with Luna to be rewarding and important but difficult, as many collaborations are.¹⁰ Mr. Luna has preferred not to give an interview on the subject.¹¹ Both artists are Native advocates and activists, but their involvement in building a tribute to Native Peoples over the burial grounds would make many Native people uncomfortable. After consulting with local tribal people and having the area blessed by local Natives and by re-appropriating the area, the artists reclaimed history in the midst of a society based on colonization. By re-appropriating land for a Native memorial, Smith and Luna “take back” what was once Native property, a rare event. Smith discussed the ceremonial opening of the park, “the Indian Center in San Francisco and AICA brought a lot of Indian people to the opening of Yerba Buena Park. The City scheduled celebrations at each piece of public art in the park. Ours was late in the day, with a large group holding hands, a prayer in the Penutian language by an elder, then a drum group with some songs.”¹²

Smith explained the dilemma of working on or near burial sites and former Native campgrounds, “Moscone Center was built on top of Ohlone burial grounds. Stanford anthropologists/archaeologists retrieved materials from the Ohlone middens and

¹⁰Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. 6/15/02

¹¹James Luna. Personal communication to the author. 11/20/07. It should be noted that not long before the request for an interview, Luna’s home was destroyed by wildfires. Smith was part of a group that attempted to assist Luna at this time.

¹²Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. 6/15/02

¹²DIA Curator of Art. Personal Communication to the author. 1/14/08.

stored them at Stanford, which James and I went to view there. The bones were repatriated to the Olhone tribe.”¹³

The Jeppesen Terminal at Denver National Airport

Even more challenging than the work at Yerba Buena Park is Smith’s involvement in the creation of a terrazzo floor in the Jeppesen Terminal at the Denver International Airport (DIA). The Jeppesen terminal building is an enigma to some because of its multiple irregular peaks. It is reminiscent of a complicated festival tent or even a prelude to the multiple peaks of the Rocky Mountains that rise just behind it. According to the curator at the DIA, the central terminal is one of the fifty most recognized buildings in the world due to its unique architecture .¹⁴

Smith was awarded the commission for the *Great Hall Floor* in 1991. It was an enormous project on which she collaborated with Ken Iwamasa, a Japanese American printmaker from Colorado. They were given a list of many motifs (fig. 6-2) to include in their work, including petroglyphs, monuments in Colorado history, and the stipulation that their work harmonize with a fountain entitled *Mountain Mirage* by Doug Hollis. *Mountain Mirage* is a vision of water, mindful of the streams and waterfalls found in the Colorado range of the Rocky Mountains brought to life as an arrangement of 3,200 vertical jets of water ejecting into the air welcoming travelers into the Grand Hall and to the state of Colorado itself with the peaceful, tranquil sound of water dancing before your very eyes.¹⁵

¹³Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to the author. 6/15/02

¹⁴DIA Curator of Art. Personal Communication to the author. 1/14/08.

¹⁵Artists’ concept statement. Denver International Airport curatorial files.

Smith and Iwamasa's *Great Hall Floor* also had to work in unison with Anna Murch's *Skydance*, and since both are found in the same terminal. The light piece by Anna Murch entitled *Sky Dance* is "projectors that rebound imagery including cloud formations and sunsets off the interior shell of the airport's trademark covering."¹⁶ *The Great Hall Floor* is a little different than these more eye-catching spectacle works.

Steven Rosen, Denver Post Art Critic, wrote in 1995,

Floors are no place to install public art. 'Great Hall Floor' a \$185,000.00 commission by New Mexico's Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Ken Iwamasa of Boulder is evidence. It uses terrazzo-floor patterns and embedded-brass forms to create an Indian like design in the terminal floor. Or so we're told. It certainly doesn't look like that. Those brass forms have all the visual impact of scuffmarks. This much-troubled project was doomed when architects decided to use polished granite for the rest of the terminal floor. It looks far more attractive and alluring than the artwork. So the airport has this big, dull swath of floor right in the center of the terminal.¹⁷

It is true that the floor art of *The Grand Hall* is hard to find. Most people, even when looking for it, would have passed it several times before realizing they were standing directly upon it. The floor consists of small, brass out-lined inlays, that the artists refer to as pictographic imbeds" of different designs based on the history and

¹⁶ Lora J. Finnegan "An art course on the concourse - Denver International Airport." *Sunset*, March 1996.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1216/is_n3_v196/ai_18144429

¹⁷ Steven Rosen. "A Critical Look at DIA. Mostly IT'S HARD TO FIND AND HARD TO SEE." *The Denver Post*. March 19, 1995.

richness of Colorado. They range from the “dinosaur period to the early Anasazi Indians, as well as the Utes and Arapahos as well as the Spanish and early pioneers, miners, ranchers farmers and today’s industries including the space age technology.”¹⁸

Much like the Yerba park memorial, this project was built over earlier previous Native campgrounds and burial areas. Lucy Lippard remarks, “Ironically the airport seals the Native burial and campground which lies beneath the floor with many artifacts intact, like a time capsule. In turn, the floors Native designs pay homage to this past while recreating the present in its image.”¹⁹ In contrast to Lippard, Smith believes that the area was not a burial ground; she maintains it was a campground.²⁰ The archaeology department of The Colorado Historic Society was inconclusive in their research on the area.

According to Smith and Iwamasa, because part of the terminal was once an Arapaho campground it was decided that Smith and Iwamasa would implement geometric designs taken from Arapaho parfleche bags. (Also mentioned in Chapter IV) Parfleche bags were made by the women of the tribe from rawhide and painted with natural, mineral pigments. Because they were used to carry personal objects similar to modern day luggage the collaborating artists thought was both ironic and appropriate in using these designs. Not only did the designs recall the tribes who had once resided in

¹⁸ Artist’s concept statement. Denver International Airport curatorial files.

¹⁹ Lucy Lippard. “Jaune Quick-to-See Smith’s Public Art: Generosity with an Edge.” *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Subversions / Affirmations* shown at The Jersey City Museum, Lehigh University Art Gallery, Austin Museum of Art at Laguna Gloria, and the Art Museum of Missoula. (Jersey City Museum: Jersey City, 1996), 84.

²⁰ Jaune Quick-to -See Smith. Personal communication to the author. 11/23/05

that area, but also it later was seen as a sly critique of the airport's baggage systems. When the airport opened after many delays, the baggage systems did not operate as planned and set back the airport's opening date. The designs on the floor were created from color derived from local, natural mineral pigments.

According to Smith there were many problems and changes with the floor and the design. The Rocky Mountain News wrote this about the project:

Changes in material terrazzo to granite and back to terrazzo again led to changes in colors; the proposed floor of vivid reds and blues with large, easily recognizable metal "pictograph" embeds now is paler, blander, mottled with patches, and dotted with eminently missable symbols of Colorado and Native American heritage. 'It's a really difficult situation,' Iwamasa said. 'I'm trying to be fair to everyone in terms of the project.' Iwamasa declined to comment on the fate of the floor. Program officials in January said they did not want to accept the work, but agreed to wait until June, at the urging of aviation director James DeLong, who said he hoped money could be found to replace the floor.²¹

In January 2008, much of the floor around the designs had been changed and according to the curator it is an on going process.²² (fig. 6-3) In the "artists concept"

²¹ Mary Voelz Chandler. "Spotlight." Rocky Mountain News (CO). February 27, 1994.

²² Denver International Airport curator. Interview with the author. January 14, 2008.

According to the DIA curator, Ken Iwamasa was responsible for most of the enormous amount of correspondence with the project's directors.

Iwamasa was asked to reply to a few questions regarding the project and his work with Smith. He was sent the questions ahead of time. After two months came the reply," Jaune

statement Smith and Iwamasa wrote, “Pastel colors from the corner rings were chosen along with an off white terazzao so that color would not overpower the water piece and too so Anna Murch’s light piece would perhaps reflect on the floor at night as it moves along the north and south direction.”²³

Lucy Lippard notes in “*Subversions and Affirmations*” these works are important because not many Native artists were receiving public commissions in the mid-nineties. Thanks to Smith and others, along with such historic events as the completion of the National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall at Washington, D.C., such commissions are now more frequent.²⁴

CULTURAL TRAIL

In 1996 Smith created a series of public monuments at the West Seattle Cultural Trail with Joe Fedderson, a Native American artist and a visual arts instructor at The Evergreen State College in Olympia Washington, and Donald Fels, a multi media artist who primarily creates public art and transitory installation art. Fedderson teaches as an

has been going through so health issues so it did take her awhile for her to get back to me. But I do not have anything particular to mention at this time, as you can imagine working with Jaune is a delight, thoughtful and very intelligent experience.” Ken Iwamasa. Personal communication to the author. March 16, 2008.

Artists’ concept statement. Denver International Airport curatorial files.

²³ Joe Fedderson, Donald Fels, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. *Voices of the Community: The West Seattle Cultural Trail*. (Seattle Arts Commission: Seattle, 2001),

²⁴ Lucy Lippard. “Jaune Quick-to-See Smith’s Public Art: Generosity with an Edge.” *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Subversions / Affirmations* shown at The Jersey City Museum, Lehigh University Art Gallery, Austin Museum of Art at Laguna Gloria, and the Art Museum of Missoula. (Jersey City Museum: Jersey City, 1996).

adjunct faculty member in the School of Education at the University of Washington. Fels was the lead artist on the project and constructed all of the work at site T107, a restoration site of a North Pacific halibut schooner on the Duwamish River.

The series of works are located near and on Alki Beach. The Western Seattle Cultural Trail itself expands from the Alki Beach to the Duwamish River. The project encompasses four: fundamental objects: (1) engraved or imprinted and inlaid stone pavers, (purposefully fashioned, rectangular slabs of clay baked in the sun or fired in a kiln until solid.) (2) The artists also implemented bronze tablets. (3) They installed viewing devices, similar to those used at scenic vistas. The viewing devices are especially equipped with custom developed optics that combines the outlook of genuine scenery with phantom images. These phantom or ghost images offer the spectator dual visions of the location, one realistic and one historic. (4) There is a group of artworks including a skeleton of a 1923 workboat at the T-107 Public Access Site. The boat contains etched panels at its base that tell the site's history.²⁵ The artists also incorporated sculptural archways, which are gateways to the trail.²⁶

These objects are combined in various ways according to subject, along the Alkali cultural trail. The inlaid pavers, made of concrete are set into the trail, and some of bronze plaques are inset into the ground, and some are attached to artistically constructed wharf posts, while some are inlaid with the paver stones. (fig 6-4) Each of these assemblies is enhanced by the addition of a map in the upper left corner specifying the

²⁵ Joe Fedderson, Donald Fels, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. *Voices of the Community*

²⁶ Fedderson, Fels, and Smith, 11.

position corresponding to street junctions.²⁷ For the purpose of this dissertation, one typical group will be discussed in detail.

The first group illustrated in the catalogue is located at 64th Avenue South West. This is a tribute to Chief Sealth who is commonly referred to as Chief Seattle. Imprinted into the sidewalk is a large figure of a black bear, an animal indigenous to the area. The illustration shows a full body profile done in a simple, straightforward black outline. It is placed centrally and appears to be imprinted into the sidewalk. Near to the bear is a text about Chief Sealth.

Chief Seattle was of Suquamish and Duwamish heritage and lived on Bainbridge Island across from Puget Sound near what is now the city of Seattle. The text on the placard refers to his reputation as a well-known statesman and someone well recognized for his peacemaking abilities. There is a dispute about his actual place of birth, some say he was born in a Duwamish village near this location, designated, as “Me Kwa Mooks,” which when translated is “place shaped like a bear’s head.” To the upper, far left of this figure is the location map. To the upper right is an illustration of two types of cedar, berry pickers used by the Suquamish, Duwamish, and Green River nations. One type is a long, five pronged, flat object, similar to a modern fork with a shorter, wider handle. The handle is wrapped with what appears to be cedar strips, holding the prongs together. The other resembles a basket with eleven prongs at the top.

Another marker has a text tribute to Dr. David (“Doc”) Maynard, an interesting and significant person in King County's early history. Following the guidance of Chief Seattle, Maynard established his home in the small community of Duwamps in 1852 and

²⁷ Fedderson, Fels, and Smith, 11.

worked as the area's initial storekeeper, medical doctor, Indian agent, and local magistrate. On the advice of Maynard, the early settlers named the settlement as a tribute to Chief Seattle.

In addition to the pavers with the black bear, larger pavers are placed along walkways with images that were historically significant to the area. The pavers are not bronze but concrete with simple designs imprinted on them. They include footprints of animals indigenous to the area such as the black bear and raccoon. One square paver has a coastal Salish canoe and another has an illustration of two hands clasped in a handshake the black outlined figures have very little detail. One arm has sleeves while the other hand and arm is bare suggesting the relationship of the historical mix of cultures in the area. This may be a reference to the meeting of Euro-Americans and the Indigenous people in the area.

In addition to the concrete pavers, there are smaller bronze inlays that consist of tools and objects of transportation used by both the White and Indigenous populations. The Euro-American tools depicted are automobile goggles, aperture openings for camera f-stops, an advertisement of a single cowboy boot for "The New York Cash Store", metal fish hooks, a two-person crosscut saw, an antique single-type pulley, an antique double style wooden pulley, a block and tackle, a hand fan, a manufactured ax and a series of three knots (clove, two half inches, and a cow hitch). The objects of transportation include, a schooner, (Fig 6-5) a side-wheeler ferry, a street or cable car, and a horse drawn carriage. Native American tools and utilitarian objects represented include salmon skewers, hammocks, baskets, a duck snare, and a spindle, a canoe, canoe paddles and a canoe baler. The architectural structures on the pavers include a hotel a tent, a cottage,

and Luna Park a twelve acre amusement park, with a roller coaster. One engraving/imprint includes an illustration of a children's game known as the "Cats Cradle" and Anglo swimmers from the 1920's are also represented. One photograph shows a family in front of their new home in April 1906.

One aspect of the markers is that they are totally indigenous in nature. Sea animals indigenous to the area are often overlooked. Crustaceans as well as several kinds of salmon are shown at various points on the trail. Microscopic diatoms and planktons are also included. Flying creatures from butterflies to eagles are included. Plants indigenous to the area are used, and the Native people knew how to use them and readily shared that information. Other objects represent the Native people who were original citizens.

Texts are also included as well. One square of text, with Chinese characters, describes the first Chinese workers to arrive in the area. (6-6) There is an inscription by Mae Yamada about the Nisei population, again among the earlier inhabitants until the forced removal of Japanese Americans at the start of World War II. ²⁸Smith earnestly desired that the Nisei population be memorialized because of the kindness shown to her by her Nisei employers. There is another by Skagit elder VI Hilbert simply states, "sacred." Yet another is an advertisement for Luna Park.

The five bollards or constructed "wharf" posts contain some information about the area's Native people. One discusses the ice age that created the landscape features of the area. One is a Vi Hilbert's 1997 poem "Sacred." It speaks of respecting the earth. One

²⁸ Nisei is a term that defines the son or daughter of Japanese immigrants who is born in America, especially the United States.

describes and defines place names, such as of “Alcoy.” Another bollard recalls of the recreation on the beach, and one describes early transportation to West Seattle. The last is a story about clam broth referring to the broth the Natives introduced to the early sea faring settlers in the area. Because these early settlers who arrived in the area could not bring any cattle on the ships the Native women taught them to nurse their children with clam broth.

Donald Fels constructed a sculpture, *Paragon*, located at Terminal 107 on the West Seattle Cultural Trail. This sculpture memorializes the populations that lived here in earlier centuries. There are panels nearby that describe the history of the area and the sculpture. The sculpture incorporates the frame of a Northern Pacific halibut schooner. Quite large, it is built at 5/8 scale. Artist Don Fels says,

Norwegian immigrant fishermen commissioned boats that reflected what they knew from their experience fishing in cold seas. Initially they fished for halibut in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. But by the time this type of boat was designed, The halibut had been fished out locally, and schooners were being built to survive the dangerous fishery in the Gulf of Alaska.²⁹

As of 2002, when this sculpture was dedicated, 14 wooden halibut schooners were still fishing in Alaska. Salish speaking Natives lived in this area for thousands of years. Perhaps this why Smith was involved with the project, since the Salish Nation is part of her heritage. The land was rich with game, and medicinal and edible plants. There was a good amount of timber and other natural resources. The catalogue describes the area as

²⁹ Seattle.gov. Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

http://www.cityofseattle.net/arts/news/press_release.asp?prID=2968&deptID=

an ideal meeting or gathering place for Natives of the time period.³⁰ The first group of Euro-Americans to arrive was the Terry family. On November 13, 1851 a group of eleven Euro- Americans landed in the area led by a gentleman named Arthur Denny. Eventually the site became an area of affluence that remains in part today.

Conservation pursuits in West Seattle are centering on every aspect of the area's past including over 150 years of Seattle's expansion. Initially in 1905, 54 years following the arrival of the non-indigenous population, the city realized the importance of the community's history and its location by placing a structure at Alki Beach adorned only with the names of the men and the children in the Denny Party. Women were originally recognized only as "wife," but were fully recognized in 2002.

The most disquieting aspect of the settlement was the dislocation of the Duwamish peoples. In 1855 the Point Elliott Treaty mandated that each and every Duwamish residing in Seattle move to reservations. A portion declined, and migrated to West Seattle and provisionally maintained their traditional lifestyles until 1893, when fire struck eight Native homes. According to at least one source, the site where the Terry and Denny arrived was a Duwamish burial ground.³⁰ The West Seattle Cultural Trail is (allegedly) Smith's third public commission that Smith involved lands that once served as a Native burial ground. Regardless, given her activism and her sometimes-radical views, it is significant that she has chosen to work on sites some Native people consider sacred. Chief Seattle, the actual inspiration for a great deal of Smith's art, including the West

³⁰ Ibid.

³⁰ *Preservation Seattle*

<http://historicseattle.org/preservationseattle/neighborhoods/defaultmay3.htm>

Seattle Trail, allegedly once remarked, “To us, the ashes of our ancestors are sacred. Their resting place is hallowed ground.”³¹ On the other hand, given the expansion of America, it would be very difficult to find a city that has not removed burial sites or simply ignored them when building over older sites. However Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [NAGPRA] also known as Public LAW 101-601--NOV. 16, 1990, states that burial objects must be removed from sites safely and returned to the Nation of their origin. No one can sell or transfer the remains or burial objects for profit. If that is not possible then any tribe or nation that can prove affiliation with the remains and or objects will receive possession. The law addresses those who purposefully participate in the excavation or inadvertent discovery of Native remains, and it and it only applies to federal or tribal lands. So in Smith’s defense, there was little she could do about being involved with areas that were former burial grounds that were not located on Federal or Native ground. Something positive can be said can be said about the architects and designers of these areas who took initiative to include the Native view in their perspective of their structures. Also, Smith employs theories of “decolonization” by visually and artistically she takes these areas when she her introduces the Native viewpoint. As with many of her works, she re-appropriates stereotypes, ancient myths and most of all ignorance about Native nations and replaces the mythology with truth. She challenges the White American attempt to eradicate the historical accuracy of accounts of our nation’s first inhabitants.

³¹ Chief Roy Crazy Horse. *Native American Burial Grounds*.

www.powhatan.org/burialgrounds.cfm

When asked about her involvement with sites that are considered sacred by Native American traditionalists, and activists as well, the artist responds, “ Yes, we were bothered by placing both the park and the airport on top of these grounds but this is a daily occurrence in this country as the prime pieces of land near water always have old Indian ruins whether it is San Francisco, Seattle, Phoenix or Santa Fe. The archeologists remove as much as they can but much material is always buried under asphaltum, buildings and cement, which is also true for both of these projects.”³² Furthermore Smith says, “No one ever questioned our motivations, I think because I stayed connected to the Arapaho people for advice and guidance all through the project. Since there were other Native pieces in the airport, there was a special Native American blessing for everything. I wasn't able to attend....”³³

The curator at the Denver International Airport had no record of any Native blessing, a ritual that should have calmed any ill feelings about the location of the site. But to some a mere blessing was not enough to appease the spirits whose remains might still be resting beneath the terminal. A number of Native groups exist that would deny the possibility building on *any* former burial ground, or the removal of burial objects and or skeletal remains for *any* reason. One well-known Native American group that stages protests and is actively involved in protecting sites is the American Indian Movement or AIM.

An example of Smith’s determination to help Native people is the 1992 sculpture *Northwind Fishing Weir Story*, also known as the *Fish Wheel Project*, which was

³²Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Personal communication to author. 11/23/05

³³Ibid.

completed in collaboration with the Duwamish tribe as a commemoration of the Indigenous Nation's perpetual conflict in seeking federal recognition and re-possession of their homeland. Due to the treaty of 1855, when the land of the area was divided among local Indigenous nations, the Duwamish were not given any land and were not recognized. The Duwamish peoples' key objective was to build a tribal center known as a "longhouse" on an area of five acres south of Seattle. It was very uncommon for the King County Arts Commission to give the authority for a public art commission to a federally unrecognized tribe. Smith felt a special connection to the Duwamish people because her heritage is Salish, as is theirs. Resolved to include the Nation's desires, she conferred with the Duwamish peoples before presenting a proposal. Smith's concept was to have the local tribal council erect a sculpture known as a *fishing wheel*, named after the salmon traps invented by the ingenious Duwamish people. The fishing wheel revolves by the power of water current. The contraption is placed in the river bottom to catch and amass salmon headed downstream. Smith saw her sculptural creation, completed by Indigenous people, as a confirmation of the nation's determination and fortitude. This sculpture suggests that the natural life cycle of salmon supports the strength and patience of the Duwamish Peoples and the interconnectedness of the salmon and the people.³⁴

³⁴ Francis E. Thurber "A Site to Behold: Creating Curricula Art About Local Urban Environmental Art." *Art Education*. Vol. 50, No. 6. (*Art and Ecology*.) November 27, 1997: 33-39. center and it was never completed. It was, as Smith stated, merely a design.

Smith's other public commissions include works for The Ridgedale Library in Hennepin County Minnesota in 1999,³⁵ the Dodge-Phelps Corporation in 1983,³⁶ a floor design at the Cultural Museum on the Flathead Reservation,³⁷ the Salt River Utilities Headquarters³⁸ and a mural at the Palms Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona.³⁹

Public art has often been used to give voice to the doctrines of colonialism, colonization and expansionism. Smith's public works advance Native art and emphasize the strong connection between her public art and the American Indian communities they

³⁵Jill L. Harnesss. Personal communication to the author. January 20, 2008. The public commission at the Dodge-Phelps Corporation from 1983, now known as the Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold, Inc. is triptych painting from 1982, entitled *Red Lake Ser.*

³⁶ *Ghost dance #7*, 1982 is a pastel, charcoal and acrylic work on canvas. It measures 58 ½ x 29 ½". It is a three-piece panel painted primarily in dark red-browns, depicting spiral motifs with human/ animal figures resembling petroglyphs.

³⁷ Francis E. Thurber "A Site to Behold: Creating Curricula Art About Local Urban Environmental Art." *Art Education*. Vol. 50, No. 6. (*Art and Ecology*.) November 27, 1997: 33-39/

³⁸In her resume Smith mentions a floor at the Cultural Museum, Flathead Reservation, Montana in 1991. This was actually to be located at the Reservation community center and it was never completed. It was, as Smith stated, merely a design.

³⁹The work at the Palms Hotel in Phoenix, 1985, has been lost or is no longer in existence. The new owners changed the decorative approach in the late 1990's to a Mediterranean style. No one could be contacted that recalled Smith's work. In fact, during this research it could not be determined if it was a mural or a painting. Smith recalls it being a mural.

CONCLUSION

“Somewhere far away Coyote laughed and laughed.”

William¹

“Coyote made me do it.”

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Native American tricksters, like Coyote, are archetypal figures that are our moral guides. Coyote, a fascinating, eccentric personality, is found in Native cultures throughout the U.S. Coyote teaches by being a creator, a joker, and a storyteller.

Sometimes Coyote is a cultural envoy providing important information to Native people. Sometimes Coyote is a magician, outwitting both people and his fellow animal beings. Other times Coyote can be a comedian, driven by impulsive urges. Coyote can best his rivals or be undermined by them. Coyote was and is meant to amuse or teach or both. As mentioned, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is one of several modern day contemporaries of Coyote.

This dissertation was based on a close examination of art produced by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. I attempted to conduct interviews with the artist and her associates, as well as read all the relevant secondary literature. I viewed many of her works in person and visited as many collectors and museums as possible to see more. I visited one of her public monuments in person. I had frequent conversations with the artist and have visited

¹ The Teaching and Sharing Center, “The Poet’s Circle” William or Cherokee Bill, <http://www.wsharing.com/WSP&Pcoyote.htm>http://www.artdaily.com/section/lastweek/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=19205&int_mod=2.html.

the artist at her home/studio in August, 2003. I have explored the social and cultural construction of Smith's art as well as her biographical / educational influences. I have determined that Smith can be seen as an authoritative figure in her Native community who keeps her identity intact while exploring viable ways to create art that reaches across racial and cultural divides. It is also evident that Smith's adaptation [to the ever-changing realm of contemporary Native art] with tropes of information (provided by her evolving interaction) with text that interacts with both current and historical events and images. I have also discovered that Smith has encountered problems as a Native woman artist. However, Smith's leadership in cooperatives and group exhibitions have paved the way for both Native women and men. Smith's involvement with her culture is commendable. She has forged a place for herself as one of the most sought after Native artists living today.

This dissertation concludes as many do. When the conclusion is reached, it is obvious that the subject deserves more treatment. This is an especially important turning point in research surrounding Smith's art and life. This is not a study completed in complete praise or total criticism of the artist. It does, however, present a balanced and comprehensive study of Smith's life, influences, and samples drawn from every aspect of her body of work. Smith's works deserve a catalogue raisonne. Hopefully this dissertation will open the door for more research, more details, and a complete study of the entire body of work both paintings and prints

**GLOSSARY OF NATIVE AMERICAN TERMS USED IN THIS TEXT
NECESSARY FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE
SMITH'S ART
TRICKSTER FIGURES**

Coyote - Coyote is a legendary figure of folklore widespread to Native American cultures. This figure is characteristically male and is usually anthropomorphic. Sometimes he has had some animal characteristics such as a furry coat, sharp ears, golden green eyes, claws and a long tail. Coyote is generally irreverent in his actions and morals. He teaches people about their weaknesses and shortcomings through his many adventures. He can be witty and cunning, but he can also be his own worst enemy. The stories and tales that comprise Coyote's adventures differ from nation to nation. Smith often employs Coyote, visually and figuratively, to show us our vulnerability to foolishness and vice. He can be a metaphor for the act of deceit for your own gain.

Kokopelli- Kokopelli is a notable fertility deity, most often illustrated as a flute player with a large humpback and usually depicted with a large penis and appendages on his head that look like antennae.²²⁰ He has been recognized by many American Indian cultures in the Southwest United States. As with many fertility deities, Kokopelli- supervises both childbirth and crops. He is a trickster god. Due to his ability to manipulate human sexuality, Kokopelli is often shown with an unbelievably large phallus. The Ho-Chunk, tribe thinks his penis is detachable, and he now and then hides it in a river or body of water to have sex with women who gather or cleanse there.

Rabbit - When the earth was new, the Ojibwa people knew they had a lot to learn. Kitchen Manitou received compassion and provided them with an educator named Nanabush. Nanabush was the son of a god and human woman. He was sent to the earthly world as an envoy to educate the Ojibwa people about the power of plants, and he taught them benevolence, bigheartedness, and integrity. First he gave names to foliage, waters, mountains, trees, and creatures. Nanabush was also a trickster, who loved to make human beings look silly. His tricks frequently failed. As a Trickster, he had many abilities, and one was to alter his shape and turn into a rabbit. Nanabush forms were rendered on stones and impressed in cliffs and caves where his rabbit-like shape can still be seen. There are Native American petroglyphs of Rabbit figures in Canada and the United States. Smith is known for depicting rabbits to imply the

²²⁰ Different cultures and researchers disagree about whether the Kokopelli is the flute player and fertility god or that the flute player is actually a different deity known as "Lahanhoya."

longevity and closeness of Native people. *Celebrate 40,000 Years of Art* is a work by Smith that illustrates the endurance of Native peoples.

Raven- Raven is a figure in Northwest or West Coast Native traditions. Amongst his numerous exploits, he took the sun and moon from the sky deity and placed them into the sky. Some legends say he brought the initial humans to the earth. Some say he found the original human children in a clamshell. One of raven's worst adversaries was his fellow trickster coyote. Many also claim he provided the great creator's humans with their fundamental food- salmon and fresh fruit.

CEREMONIAL AND RELIGIOUS TERMS

Drums- To American Indians the musical instrument with the greatest extent of power is the drum. A ceremonial event today such as a memorial, Powwow, 49 party (a party held after a Powwows), graduation, give away, wedding, blessing, or any honorable event, still has the music of the drum. Different nations or tribes possess different rituals regarding the drum and how to use it. The basic structure is similar in most nations. Each uses a wooden structure or a carefully constructed log, topped by a tanned deerskin or elk skin, carefully cured usually by animal brains. The skin is stretched tightly across the opening by animal thread or leather straps. Usually the drums are two and one half to three feet in width, played by a group of men who stand around the drum in a circle. Some nations use a single drum, called a hand drum.

Native Drum Groups- The "heartbeat" of Native American ceremony or ritual is the drum. At Powwows and sometimes other events there are many groups of drummers and drums that take turns playing. Each group has a name that represents their Nation, style, the group's idea of their individual identification. A group consists of four or five players sometimes more. More often than not they are related or close as friends. They are usually led by a singer who is closely followed in harmony by a second singer. The drums are usually placed around the outer edges of the powwow arena area. Drummers must all know the songs for each type of dance-honor songs, gourd songs, etc. Sometimes others including women gather around the drum. Songs are often recorded for record and for younger members of the family to learn once their time comes to take their place at the drum. If a drum group is particularly good, they are invited to play at many powwows, and sometimes they obtain recording contracts. During Powwows and other events certain drums are asked to play certain songs. If someone requests a certain drum, they must pay for the privilege. At most Powwows the best drum groups are awarded cash prizes. *Drum, Sweat and Tears*, a painting by Smith, presents the many levels and the depth of the Drum's significance through a rich, layered palimpsest of text and images.

Powwows- A conference, meeting, or council group of Native Americans. They can be a festivity or a series of dances and or ceremonies.

Sweat lodge - During a “sweat” ceremony people enter a handmade lodge of skins or other materials to purify their body and soul. They enter the lodge for four intervals and remain while heated rocks have water poured on them for a purification ceremony. Unlike a European sauna, it has a very deep religious and spiritual significance. Certain rules must always be followed. People pray, sing, and use ceremonial rattles and drums. The sweat lodge is a symbol of the womb of mother Earth, and the heated stones signify her body, which supports all life. The fire lit to heat the rocks symbolizes the light of the world, and is the foundation of all life and power. The water slowly releases the heat in the stones, which rises as steam and permeates the air to create a hot, humid atmosphere. The purpose of a sweat is to purify negative emotions, healing of physical sickness, purifying of mental apprehensions and liberate spiritual obstructions. People chant, sing, and often cry as they feel the spiritualism of the ceremony healing their ailments.

Peyote Religion and The Native American Church- Native American Peyote used mostly by the Native American Church religion is an organized, reasonably recognized phenomenon that goes back to around 1880 in western Oklahoma. At this point in time the newly imprisoned Kiowa and Comanche Indians lived under burdensome limitations in poverty-stricken conditions that saw a deficiency in living conditions and an increase in intense starvation. In such intolerable living conditions religious movements began to rise to provide hope to a hopeless race. Today the Native American Church contribution is widespread among Native Americans. About one-fourth of the Indian population participates in this religion. Today it stands as one of the most purposeful, spiritually and physically powerful influences in Native America

Ghost Dance- The Ghost Dance that came about around 1890, organized by a religious leader known as Wavoka.² It gained an unusual prominence promising that the American Indians’ world would revive, seeing the food supplies would return and the white race would disappear. Obviously it was threatening to the white race. It was brought to a bloody and vicious end at the Battle of Wounded Knee, one of the worst massacres in United States history. Certain clothing was made to be worn during battle and during the ghost dance. Those items of clothing were thought to provide protection against evil and other warriors. Smith’s *Flathead War shirt* exemplifies these ideals. It is meant to protect present day Natives from the weaknesses and failures that White culture employs to remove the strength of “Native warriors.”²²¹

Potlatch- The potlatch is a practice that demonstrates the shape of governmental authority, wealth, social standing, and, the enduring existence of ritual sacred practices.

²²¹ See section **CREATORS OR SPIRITUAL BEINGS**

A potlatch usually involves ceremonial time. This includes commemoration of childbirth, celebration of passages, puberty marriages, memorial services, or honoring of the departed. It is a political and societal exchange. The potlatch is a very important part of the Northwest Coast Native peoples' societies. Protocol varies with the individual nations. Sometimes the potlatch involves music and dancing, theatre, deeds, and sacred rituals. The consecrated rituals are mostly in the winter. During this time, hierarchical relationships in and among clans, communities, and various nations, are practiced and strengthened by distributing prosperity, dance presentations, and various rituals. Family status is elevated by those who haven't the most possessions but give away their possessions in a ceremonial rite of passing wealth. The host family display their wealth and prominence by giving away the goods they gather over time for the celebration.

REGALIA

REGALIA-Regalia is the ceremonial clothing worn by Natives at Powwows and various ceremonies. Many people refer to the clothing as "costumes." The correct term is "regalia." Smith does paintings and prints of Native clothing, both men's, and women's, to remind viewers of many things-- the channeling of energy, protection, and a pride and spirit that can never be deterred.

WAR SHIRTS-In the nineteenth century war shirts had numerous functions other than existing as simple items of clothing. In many Native communities from all over the United States and Canada, War shirts were hand made to pay tribute to warriors and a select few men with special attributes of leadership and spiritual power. They were constructed for those with combatant strengths, powers of mysticism and as a way to bring forth powers attributed to animals. The designs on the shirts illustrated special powers, symbols of remarkable actions, and noteworthy battles. Smith's work *I See Red: Chief Sleepy Eye War Shirt* is a modern version made to protect Native peoples from the new tribulations brought on by modern society and its ills. It also speaks to the rage felt by Native people trying to live in two worlds or cultures.

Ghost Dance Dresses- Women's ceremonial clothing was as significant as the men's and the group itself. Ghost Dance dresses and shirts, decorated with powerful symbols, reflected the sacred facets of the ritual. Smith often paints heavily outlined figures of dresses. Works *Like a Tree* epitomizes the strength of Indigenous women and the many dilemmas they face today.

Feathers- A Golden or Bald Eagle feather it is one of the most gratifying items one can ever be presented. The Indians accept as true that eagles have correlation with the heavens because the sky is their home. Native Americans believe that if they are presented with an eagle feather, it is a symbol from above. They believe that the eagle is the leader of all birds, because it soars high above as it does and has better vision than all the birds. Once presented with an eagle feather, one is required take care of it.

It is considered disrespectful to treat it without love and great care. An eagle feather is a lot like the American flag; it should be treated with care and should not be dropped on the ground. At a Powwow, if a dancer's feather should drop to the arena floor, all dancing must stop until the proper ritual is conducted, and the feather is removed from the dance area.

Parfleche Bags-Rawhide bags that resemble file folders or envelopes. Made by the women of certain tribes, they were painted in abstract designs with natural pigments. They were used to carry dried meat and other items.

ART TERMS

American Indian Art Markets-Art shows are large markets open to and featuring Native American art and artists. These shows are consumer, oriented manner and emphasize Native American Art. Some shows are juried or the artists are invited, which enforces quality standards.

Petroglyphs- These are images engraved into a rock's face. Petroglyphs are one of the most enduring examples of American Indian art. Native Americans do not consider petroglyphs to be art but rather documentation of sacred events.

Pictographs- These are rudimentary symbols or drawings of figures and symbols used in early Native American art and documentation. They are colored with red, white, yellow, or black dyes made from various minerals or vegetation. Sometimes fingers are painting instrument made some of the figures. Other times brushes were constructed with animal hair or vegetation fibers.

Ledger art-. As warfare and constant relocation became a norm of Native nomadic life, the only property that could be safely kept were items that could be easily retrieved and carried away. Ledger books were suited to safeguarding historical information and other vital facts. Ledger books, pencils and inks were often obtained by trade or by raids and the bounty of warfare. After Native people came into contact with European and American artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin, Native art became more naturalistic in its orientation. Smith often incorporates traditional Flathead ledger art into her works, especially her prints.

The Kiowa School- Sometime around 1918 a group of young Kiowas, then located in Oklahoma, became fervently involved in producing art-- mostly drawings and sketches. These were no commonplace young men. They were sons and grandsons of chiefs and medicine men. Sometimes they were fortunate to obtain good paper and watercolors. But usually they used notebook paper "borrowed" from school.

Indian style or flat-style painting –This type of painting is done in a two-dimensional style with gouache paints. The subject matter was usually traditional.

Gouache painting is a European tradition involving a type of watercolor medium used by the artists involved with the Santa Fe and Kiowa School.

Santa Fe School -Dorothy Dunn was a pioneering art instructor with a great deal of influence over the development of Native American art in the 20th century. Schooled in Chicago, Dunn came to New Mexico in the mid-1920s to develop **The Art Studio** at the Santa Fe Indian School. Among her students were Allan Houser, Ben Quintana, Harrison Begay, Joe H. Herrera, Quincy Tahoma, Andy Tsihnajinnie, Pablita Velarde, Eva Mirabel, Tonita Lujan, Pop Chalee, Oscar Howe, and Geronima Cruz Montoya

San Ildefonso Painting-By the early 1930s this new style, which eventually came to be considered a traditional form of Native American painting, was adopted by artists in the San Ildefonso pueblo neighboring pueblos in the Rio Grande valley. The movement, typified by bold color, balanced compositions, and figures painted without shading, perspective, or foreground and background has continued to influence succeeding generations of Native painters. The first subjects of these paintings included ceremonial dances, activities of daily life, and adaptations of traditional pottery designs and decorative motifs.

DISTINCTIVE MEDIA

Quill Work- Porcupine quilling is a very old Native American art used particularly among East Coast and Plains tribes. Indian quillwork involved softening and dying stiff porcupine quills by boiling and chewing, and then interlacing, or sewed them upon leather or birch bark. The most astonishing examples of porcupine quill worked were the Plains Indian war shirts. Each one would take a skilled artist more than a year to complete. Such items as Medicine bags, moccasins, and jewelry, birch bark boxes, and baskets were other objects frequently quilled.

Beading- Traditionally, Native American beads were made from shells, coral, turquoise and other stones, copper and silver, wood, amber, ivory, and animal skeletons, horns, and sometimes animal teeth. Glass beads came into use when colonists brought them from Europe for trade. In modern times glass beads, predominantly fine seed beads, are the most important materials for traditional beaders of many tribes. There are many different styles of American Indian beading.

RACIAL TERMS OR PHRASES

FBI-This could stand for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but more recently Native humor has used it as an acronym for “full blooded Indian.”

Flathead- The Flathead peoples are a confederation of three nations--the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d'Oreille, and the Kootenai. “Confederated Salish” refers to both

the Salish and Pend d'Oreille tribes. The term "Flatheads" does not refer to the shape of the heads. Because they used means to compress their own heads into points, they called those not of their belief system Flatheads."²²²

Apple - To the American Indian an "apple" is a person who is red on the outside and white on the inside. It is someone who complies with white society and denies his or her own culture. Smith's work *Modern Times* also speaks to living in two cultures and specifically to Natives living as "apples."

Wannabe-This is a person who wants to be Indian. In more open terms it can be defined as a person who mimics or impersonates another. It can be pronounced - "Won-ah-bee". From the words "Want to be" or "Wanna Be." Many wannabes are of mixed blood. They could be a mixture of White, Hispanic, African American or any variety of races.

ANIMALS

Buffalo -The American buffalo or bison inhabited the Great Plains of the United States and Canada in massive herds, ranging from the Great Slave Lake in Canada's far north to Mexico in the south, and from eastern Oregon almost to the Atlantic Ocean until it was decimated by the settlers. *Genesis* by Smith signifies the importance of the buffalo and the declining environment that threatens its existence.

Deer- Deer served as prey, sacrifices, and also mentioned as "first helper" in some materialization tales. The deer is noted for family defense and velocity. "Deer Woman" is a figure of native folklore that can transform herself from a doe into a beautiful woman. As a woman she appears at powwows, bars, and other gathering places to ensnare men with her beauty and eventually to kill them.

Water Bird- Water birds symbolize renewal of life, rainy seasons, bodies of water, remote travel, distant vision, and knowledge.

Owl- A keen hunter, the owl is connected with darkness and night as well as having keen eyes and clever hunter. Among most Native Nations, the owl is considered a bad omen, or a warning of death.

Eagle-The eagle is one of the most revered birds. It is sacred a carrier of prayers. Many Indian societies respect this bird as having valor, wisdom, and a unique relationship to the creator. The eagle is associated with spirits and visions.

Snake- Associated with numerous healing and fertility rituals, the snake is connected

²²² *The Flathead Tribe*

<http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/transmiss/congress/flathead.html>

with lightning, the male organ, speed, and stealth. He is usually illustrated with his tongue extended. He is also well thought of as a hunter, and appears in some materialization stories.

CREATORS OR SPIRITUAL BEINGS

The Great Creator- The **Great Spirit** is a conception of a supreme being prevalent among Native American and First Nations cultures. Also called *Wakan Tanka* in Lakota, *The Creator*, or *The Great Maker* in English and *Gitchi Manitou* in Algonquian, the *Great Spirit* was a syncretist conception of God. The Great Creator is personal, close to the people. He ruled the “heavenly hunting ground,” a place similar to Heaven. Chief Dan Evehema, a spiritual leader of the Hopi Nation, described the Great Spirit as follows: “The Great Spirit is all-powerful. He taught us how to live, to worship, where to go and what food to carry, gave us seeds to plant and harvest. He gave us a set of sacred stone tablets into which he breathed all teachings in order to safeguard his land and life. In these stone tablets were inscribed instructions, prophecies and warnings.”

Amotken – Amotken is the creator god of the Salish and other American Indians; he resides in heaven, isolated and alone. He is an old man, intelligent and caring, with an infinite consideration for his creation. Coyote serves as his envoy. IN the painting *Genesis*, Smith states, “IN THE BEGINNING AMOTKEN CREATED COYOTE AND ASSIGNED TO HIM THE WELFARE.” This could be read that coyote was put here to keep us from straying from our destiny and watch over us in his own way.

FOOD

Fry bread -Fry bread is an American Indian food found throughout the US. Fry bread is unleavened dough, deep-fried in oil, or lard. The dough is generally leavened by yeast or baking powder. Fry bread was created in the 1800s, when the American Indian was forced onto reservations. Smith’s painting *Fry Bread* exposes the food for all that it is both enjoyable and detrimental in it.

Commodities- Commodities are foods and other goods given by the government to those in need, usually consisting of necessities and unhealthy foods. Each month’s foods and items vary due to donations.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORICAL FIGURES

Chief Seattle- (1786 -1866) Ts’ial-la-kum, Chief Sealh, also known as Chief Seattle, was a leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish American Indian tribe. He was very respected. Many believed he was a chief but he was not. His father was a chief but they did not practice descendancy in ruling families. He gave a now controversial speech that has been attributed to a local poet and a screenwriter from the 1970s. The poet who translated the speech did not know Sealh’s language and he waited thirty

years to publish it. The original translation of the speech was quite questionable in nature and is now lost. However Many posters, t-shirts, calendars have been made with the wisdom allegedly attributed to him. One version mentions bison and railroads things that Chief Seattle would have never seen or even heard of during his lifetime. Smith is a reverent follower of Chief Seattle and did a series of works in his honor and the honor of his beliefs. On the official Susquamish tribal website maintains that Seattle made the speech. Perhaps it is not verbatim, but it is his speech according to his surviving peoples.

Crazy Horse- Tashunca-utico (1849-1877). Revered for his ferociousness in combat, Crazy Horse was known among his people as a prophet and a great leader devoted to defending the culture and standards of the Lakota people.

Sitting Bull- Tatanka Iyotaka (1831-1890) was a Sioux chief. He was considered the principal chief of the Dakota Sioux, who were removed from their reservation in the Black Hills by miners in 1876. He fought against the whites and other Native Americans, rejecting offers to be moved to Indian Territory. He helped defeat Gen. George A. Custer and his army in June, 1876. A prison guard later murdered him.

Wavoka- Wovoka was of Paiute ancestry. Wovoka claimed to have had a prophetic vision during the solar eclipse on January 1, 1889. Wovoka's vision entailed the resurrection of the Paiute dead and the removal of whites and their works from North America. Wovoka taught that in order to bring this vision to pass the Native Americans must live righteously and perform a traditional round dance, known as the Ghost Dance, in a series of five-day gatherings. Wovoka's teachings spread quickly among many Native American peoples, notably the Lakota. It is important to note is that Wovoka's preaching included messages of non-violence.

CAUCASIAN HISTORICAL FIGURES

Karl Bodmer- (February 6, 1809–October 30, 1893) was a Swiss painter of the American West. He accompanied German explorer Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied from 1832 through 1834 on his Missouri River expedition. Maximilian hired him as an artist with the specific intent of traveling through the American West and recording images of the different tribes they saw along the way.

George Catlin- (1796-1872) After a short career as a lawyer, Catlin produced two major collections of paintings of American Indians and a series of books chronicling his journeys among the Native peoples of North, Central and South America. Claiming his curiosity in America's "vanishing race" was started by a visiting American Indian delegation in Philadelphia, he decided to record the appearance and customs of America's Native people.

George A. Custer- (1839-1876) Originating in Fort Riley, Kansas, Custer marched

with approximately 700 soldiers, moving south for several days, identifying Indian camp signs all along the way. On 24 June, the Arikara and Osage scouts identified a party of Sioux following them. The Sioux fled when approached, but Custer did not want any of the Sioux encampments to escape. When his regiment reached the Sioux encampment on 25 June 1876, Custer made a decision to attack and fight the Indians. One of the most chronicled events in the history of the American West resulted, the famous Battle of the Little Big Horn, otherwise known as Custer's Last Stand. Smith's work *Rain* depicts a prone Custer being tied down by Lilliputian sized Native figures.

Edward Curtis -(1840-1887) Curtis was often portrayed as a exceptional photographer but also criticized for manipulating his images. Curtis's photographs have been found to misrepresent American Indians by depicting them with the accepted notions and stereotypes of the time period. Although the early twentieth century was difficult time for most Native communities in America, American Indians were far from being a "vanishing race," although this was what Curtis' images set out to document. When Natives' rights were being curtailed and the federal government ignored its treaties, many Natives were successfully becoming accustomed to Western society. By reinforcing the Native identity as the "noble savage" and a catastrophic vanishing race, Curtis took attention away from the true dilemma of American Natives at the time when he was witnessing their squalid conditions on reservations first-hand and their effort to find their position in Western culture and acclimatize to their changing world. In many of his images Curtis removed parasols, suspenders, wagons, and other traces of Western and material culture from his pictures. He also paid Natives to pose in staged scenes, wear historically inaccurate dress and costumes, dance and partake in simulated ceremonies. He distorted and maneuvered his pictures to create a misleading ethnographic reproduction of Native tribes as if untouched by Western society.

WAR GAMES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Counting coup- Counting coup was a battle practice of Native Americans of the Great Plains. A nonviolent demonstration of bravery, it consisted of touching an enemy warrior, with the hand or with a *coup stick*, then running away unharmed. Risk of injury or death was involved, should the other warrior respond violently. The phrase "counting coup" can also refer to the recounting of stories about battle exploits. "Coup Marks" was the name chosen for one of the artist cooperatives that Smith helped originate.

49- An official party after powwows usually at an undesignated location. Starting in the late 1940s and 1950s high- school and college-aged Native teenagers and young adults would gather together for their own drum festivities after the traditional ceremonies were held. These drum celebrations are usually held late at night and the

songs are less than traditional. Sometimes lyrics include songs about “Indian Girls,” and or “let me drive you home in my one-eyed Indian car.”²²³ Some say the “49” stands for 49 Native American veterans who served the United States armed services in WWI and returned home without being American citizens.²²⁴

Stomp dance- The **Stomp Dance** is executed by the various Southeastern tribes and Native American communities, including the Cherokee, Creeks, and Seminoles. Active Stomp Dance communities still exist in North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alabama and Florida. The Word “stomp” is a description of the dance. There is no correlation to Native American language. Smith recalls that when she became angry her father would remind her “not to do the stomp dance.” This portion of the elder Smith’s humor is memorialized in the work *Modern Times*.

Stick ball- Stickball has been a part of Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Creeks entertainment. Each team tries to advance the ball down the field to the other team's goalpost using only their sticks, never touching or throwing the ball with their hands. Points are scored when a player hits the opposing team's goalpost with the ball.

Hand games- Hand games, like the gift exchange are a significant way to reallocate goods among community members.. In the oral traditions of Native peoples, gamblers, like tricksters, are inclined to be upper limit figures that can move between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Hand games are a manner of gambling because you can lose.

VARIOUS HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS TERMS

Pan-Indianism- The process by which Natives that met mostly at boarding schools started to marry and produce children of different nations such as Arapaho-Sioux, or Sioux –Caddo. It is the Native American version of the “melting pot.”

Quincentennary- This is also known as the anniversary of Columbus’s so-called discovery of North America. Many Native Americans do not feel that Columbus Day or any of his activities should be celebrated. Many of the historical accounts

²²³ Mr. Benny Smith personal communication with the author. Mr. Smith was a counselor at Haskell Indian Nations University for over twenty-five years. He is the son of the famed Redbird Smith. Today he trains horses and is asked to officiate at most of Haskell’s sacred ceremonies.

²²⁴ This story could be folklore. There are many stories how the actual name “49” came about.

recognizing his contributions have not fully reported accurate versions of his travels or his accomplishments. Native American activists, artists, and educators are trying to rectify this misinformation through education and protests.

Reservation-An Indian reservation is territory that is assigned to a tribe under the American Indian tribes. Reservations are directly managed by United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Reservations were formed when settlers took Native land by violence and powerful war techniques from the American Indians. The land is now federal territory, and Native Americans have restricted national sovereignty laws on these areas, which differ from the non-Native Laws. For example they can authorize legal casinos on reservations, which attract recreational visitors who bring in money for these impoverished areas. There are nearly 300 reservations in the United States, not all of the country's over 550 recognized tribes have a reservation—certain nations have more than one reservation, others don't have any. Some tribes, because they won't follow governmental regulations are not federally recognized and get none of the privileges afforded other nations

Rez—Native American slang abbreviation of the word “reservation.”

Indian Gaming- As an independent federal regulatory agency of the United States, the National Indian Gaming Commission was established to carry out the requirements of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (Act). The Commission includes a Chairman and two Commissioners, each of whom serves on a full-time basis for a three-year term. The Chairman is appointed by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate.

Smallpox and AIDS-Very contagious diseases spread among humans. Smallpox is said to be responsible for the deaths of millions of Native Americans. the American Indian population in North America has been estimated at approximately twelve million, but by the early nineteen hundreds, the population had been reduced to roughly four hundred and seventy-four thousand. It is impossible to arrive at a number for the millions of American Indians killed during this period by European diseases, with smallpox the deadliest by far.²²⁵ Today AIDS affects more than one million Native Americans across the Arizona, Washington, and Alaska. Many fear that the numbers are rapidly increasing and it could become the next deadliest epidemic among the Native population.²²⁶ Smith refers to the small pox epidemics in

²²⁵ Ned O. Eddins. “The Plains Indians Small Pox.”

http://www.thefurtrapper.com/indian_smallpox.htm

²²⁶ Judy Nichols, “Aids Takes a Growing Toll on Native Americans. The *Arizona Republic*. <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/0703NativeAIDS-main.html> 8

her *Paper Dolls for a Post-Columbian World*.

Missionaries- Missionaries were groups of religious people that sought to venture into Indian country spreading religion, education and white behavior and customs to the Native “savages.” Ironically the most missions were built with Indian labor. The Jesuit missionary that came to the Flathead tribe was Father Desmet. Father Desmet’s work began in 1840 when he set out for the Flathead country in the Far Northwest.

DEFINING AMERICAN INDIAN STATUS

CDIB-“Certificate Degree of American Indian Blood” is an official government document that officially states that a person is genetically a definite degree of Native American blood of a federally recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community. Certificates are carefully and procedurally given out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but only after an applicant can prove a completed genealogy with supporting legal documents such as birth certificates, through one or both birth parents, from an enrolled Indian or an Indian listed in a base roll such as the Dawes Rolls. The genealogies proven on previously issued CDIB’s or on the governmental rolls on the filer’s ancestry are used to establish the filer’s blood degree (unless if those in charge challenge them as erroneous). These days nations necessitate a definite bare minimum degree of tribal heritage for membership. Some federal benefits like per diem payments, casino payouts, and per capita money require a minimum of Indian blood degree. United States public law 101-644 states that in order to exhibit or sell work labeled, as “Native American” one must be in possession of an official certificate degree of American Indian blood. This can be a great disadvantage for those who belong to a nation that is not federally recognized.

Tribal Membership-Some tribes require a tribal membership along with a CDIB for verification of federal benefits. This usually involves someone who has a blood quantum that keeps them from federal care but includes them in funding in schooling and health care.

Tribal Enrollment number- This is an enrollment number given to members of a Native American descent by their tribal headquarters. The two issues between having a CDIB and or an enrollment card have become snarled in the twentieth century as the United States government has inserted itself more and more into the internal affairs of Indian nations. Ask who is Indian, and you will get divergent responses depending on who is answering. The U.S. Census Bureau, state governments, various federal government programs and agencies, and tribal governments all have different definitions. The criteria vary from a specific amount of blood quantum and

descendency to residency and self- identification.²²⁷

Public law 101-644-The Act of August 27, 1935 (49 Stat. 891; 25 U.S.C. 305 et seq.; 18 U.S.C. 1158-59), created the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. The Board is responsible for promoting the development of American Indian and Alaska Native arts and crafts, improving the economic status of members of Federally recognized tribes, and helping to develop and expand marketing opportunities for arts and crafts produced by American Indians and Alaska Natives. The 1935 Act adopted criminal penalties for selling goods misrepresented as Indian-produced. This provision, currently located in section 1159 of title 18, United States Code, set fines not to exceed \$500 or imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both. Although this law was in effect for many years, it provided no meaningful deterrent to those who misrepresent imitation arts and crafts as Indian produced. In addition, it required willful intent to prove a violation, and very little enforcement took place. In response to growing sales in the billion-dollar U.S. Indian arts and crafts market of products misrepresented or erroneously represented as produced by Indians, Congress passed the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. This Act is essentially a truth-in-advertising law dened to prevent marketing products as "Indian made" when the products are not, in fact, made by Indians as defined by the Act.⁹ Smith protests this law. Some tribes are not federally documented. Also depending on your tribe you must follow you mother or father's blood lineage. Some tribes go by descendency and some go by blood quantum. So although some people are full bloods neither tribe will recognize them because of their lack of blood quantum. Some refuse to register with the government for fear of being "marked." Therefore they can't sell their art as authentically Native.

²²⁷ 8

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